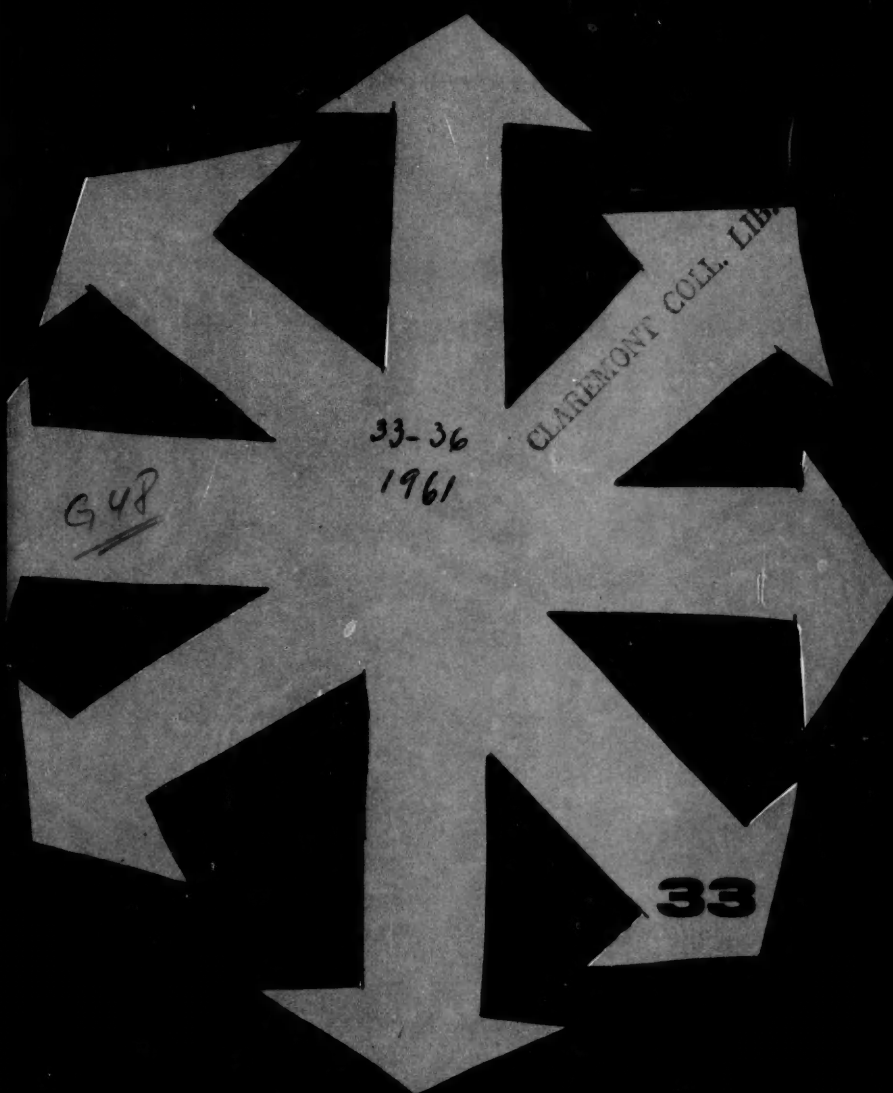
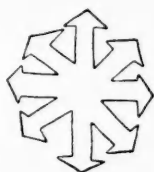


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An International Review of Philosophy and Humanistic Studies • \$1.25



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a quarterly publication of

THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR
PHILOSOPHY AND HUMANISTIC STUDIES

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The English-language edition of *Diogenes* is published quarterly in December, March, June, and September by Mario Casalini, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, New York.

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1 year, \$4.00; 2 years, \$7.50; 3 years, \$10.50. Canada and Pan American Postal Union: 1 year, \$4.50; 2 years, \$8.50; 3 years, \$12.00. All other countries: 1 year, \$5.00; 2 years, \$9.50; 3 years, \$13.50. Single copies: \$1.25.

Parallel editions published simultaneously:

French: Published by Librairie Gallimard, Paris.

Spanish: Published by Editorial Sudamericana, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Arabian: Published by Librairie Misr, Cairo, Egypt.

The articles published in *Diogenes* express freely the most diverse opinions, for which the Editors can in no way be held responsible.



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Printed in Italy.

DIOGENES

*Spring 1961**Number 33*

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ADAPTATION OF TRADITIONAL SOCIETY TO MODERN MASS SOCIETY

This paper is confined to Indian, more specifically Hindu, society. It tries to assess the process of change going on in this society from the point of view of new needs and old values. In doing so, it draws on an unscholarly but inside acquaintance with the situation and makes no claim to completeness either of analysis or treatment.

I. THE SETTING

I happen to be writing this from the campus of the University of Poona which only twelve years ago was the summer residence of the Governor of Bombay. Shortly after Independence, the Governor made over his imposing residence and spacious lawns to the University. Today, masons and professors are still busy adding new wings to it. Seen from here, there is much evidence of the change that is taking place in India. Within a short distance is the National Chemical Laboratory, one of a series of well-equipped

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scientific institutions which the Indian Government has established in different parts of the country. The results of its applied research are available to all industry, not least to some of the big industries in the capital city of Bombay. Across the railway line and along the road, as indeed all round Poona, there are big and small structures, few of them more than ten years old, in which small and medium entrepreneurs are busy manufacturing all manner of things from nuts and bolts to tractors and oil engines. At the foot of the hill, a Polytechnic Institute is being built; it will train the foremen and technicians so badly needed today. By its side is an Electric Sub-station; and midway up the hill is a temple of the Mother Goddess. The Sub-station transmits insufficient electricity to the suburbs and nearby villages. The temple is old, but the very large number of people who go to it is, I am told, a new phenomenon. That this number is on the increase may well betoken improvement not in religion but in transport.

The last time I visited the temple was with a Vice-President of the World Bank. There was an important fair connected with it and the hillside was studded with stalls and booths. The Vice-President wanted to get the feel of the populace in holiday mood. They seemed to him vital and, considering their poverty, inexplicably gay. The World Bank was not unconnected with the Sub-station. For it was financing the Koyna Hydro-Electric Project, one of the biggest under the Second Five Year Plan, which today engineers of the Bombay State are working overtime to complete. In a year or two there will be sufficient electricity for all important towns around here. But will there be enough for the farmers and artisans in villages who want to pump water to their fields or weave cloth on power-loom? I accompanied the Vice-President over a two-hundred mile route through the Southern Maharashtra country. Everywhere the villagers and small industrialists said to him, "You have lent money to our Government for the Koyna Project. Please also give them enough for a transmission line which will bring electricity to us."

To go back to the temple. The farmers of even quite distant villages, including those who asked for electricity, trek here with their wives and children, or travel in bullock carts, on days of special holiness or festivity. But in Poona itself the worshippers are drawn from all classes. They come on bicycles, in cars and on

buses; give coins to the beggars who line up at the temple; and lay flowers and fruits before the Mother Goddess. Some of them know English. But most of them do not.

Something rather different happens in a Mandir Hall of Worship—built only two years ago, a stone's throw from the hill and overlooked by the temple. The Mandir is built in simple style and is like any other house in the locality. Indeed it is lived in by the disciple of a departed sage. Himself now a teacher, he conducts evening worship for a rapidly increasing circle of men and women whose interest ranges from spiritual discipline to intellectual curiosity. What distinguishes them from the congregation at the temple is that every one who comes here knows English. The talk itself is in very good English. It is on the Gita and is interspersed with Sanskrit verses and phrases. The Guru is also a musician of some note. He illustrates his lectures by snatches of Bengali song from Ramprasad and Tagore. The audience joins in devotional songs in Hindi and Marathi at the end of the discourse when "Arati" or lighted camphor is waved before the image of Krishna. Among the devotees are Sindhis, Punjabis, Maharashtrians, Kannadigas, Bengalis and Tamilians: for Poona offers many more job opportunities than in the past and to this as to other important cities, people come from all over India to seek those opportunities.

Somewhere between the Mandir and the temple is a co-operative housing colony for Harijans (untouchables) who work as labourers in and around Poona. The Municipal Corporation is alive to social obligations. It made available the site for the Harijans—a few of them, so few as to be merely token—and gave them other facilities for building the neat little group of houses in which they now live. Just across the road is another housing colony, but there is no comparison between the two, for the latter belongs to people who retired from senior Government jobs, military and civil. In no village would such proximity have been possible between high caste and Harijan. Poona is a city and, therefore, different.

Last, there is an adjoining site on which a building is yet to come up. It will house a college for Co-operative Training. For a whole range of activity in rural areas—credit marketing, processing and so forth—is to be organised on a co-operative basis. This is an important part of the Plan. Personnel must be trained, and the senior ones for the whole of India will be trained here.

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So much for a cross section of the change that may be witnessed in almost any part of India. It is no more than a coincidence that most of the things I have mentioned are situated within a mile or so of the campus of the University of Poona.

II. CHANGE AND NO CHANGE

The change *is* there. With the energies liberated by independence, with the conception of planning translated into five-year plans, with help received from abroad after the war and fortunes made at home during it, Government, businessmen and industrialists alike set to build an impressive structure of industrial production for the country. In agriculture some progress was made but largely by engineers who started building works of irrigation. There had been Indian industrialists of vision like Jamshedji Tata, a pioneer in steel and electricity. After Independence, a number of hydro-electric and thermal projects were planned and today the power generated is $2\frac{1}{2}$ times what it was in 1951. Electric grids span the country and demand outruns the supply. Steel will soon be produced in large quantities at the different steel mills in the establishment of which Germany, Britain and Russia have helped. Industrial production has increased severalfold in other ways. Thus, chemicals, cement and paper are more than two times, sugar just under two times, and machine tools and other engineering parts as many as three times their level of production only nine years ago, i.e. at the beginning of the First Five-Year Plan. There is an unmistakable air of prosperity among industrial workers and generally in towns and cities. In the country-side too, where irrigation is available, or cash crops are grown, or the food crops are surplus to requirements, there is agricultural prosperity. The cultivator, especially the one who owns more than just a few acres of land, is, on the whole, better off than in the past.

Nor is the progress merely quantitative. Industries have shown that they can adapt themselves to new technical and managerial techniques at all levels. Skilled workers in factories and workshops have surprised competent observers by the degree of craftsmanship which they have acquired within a short period in lines with which they were unfamiliar only a few years ago. Nor does this apply to the bigger industrial units only—textile, engineering or chemical—but to numerous medium and small concerns which

are rapidly being set up all over the country. One may visit any exhibition of small industries in any part of India and be amazed at the number of small manufacturers working with improvised equipment who have produced marketable goods, some of which are finding markets outside the country. Educated young men, as well as the older ones, who had previously worked with British businessmen and manufacturers, have proved themselves fit to occupy posts of managerial and administrative responsibility. In the State-managed departments and institutions, including corporations which are in charge of the manufacture of aircraft, machine tools, electrical goods and so forth, officials have not been wanting who have the highest capacity for planning, execution and management. It might seem that here is a traditional society which, given the opportunity, has not only seized it but has made a success of adapting its own ways of life to the requirements of a modern industrial context.

And yet in a sense the change is *not* there. The old ways persist and there is considerable maladjustment, perhaps best illustrated by comparison between the urban and rural sectors. In the half a million villages of India live 80 per cent of its people. Nearly all of them, as also a portion of the townsfolk, make their living from the produce of the land and things made out of that produce. Half the national income is derived from agriculture. Yet, even a cursory visit to the villages will reveal that the prosperity of a few is deceptive if it is equated with the even reasonable well-being of all. Where disparities existed, they have remained. The inequalities of caste persist. The abolition of untouchability is statutory, not actual. It is easy enough for a Government or a Local Authority to make an impressive gesture here and there and provide houses for a few Harijan families. It is quite a different matter to ensure in practice that sections of the population who have for centuries been denied the bare necessities of life are rehabilitated socially and economically. There is no reason to think that the under-privileged have benefited to any appreciable extent. Indeed, a truer picture of reality can be had in the result of a recent investigation in the Bombay State which showed that out of 70 villages surveyed, in not even one had the Harijans been allowed to take water from the common well. Community development and National Extension have been responsible for some good

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work, but recent evaluation report emphasizes the fact that in some parts of the country the benefits offered have passed to the more powerful sections of the community and where this has happened the rich have tended to become richer while the poor have remained more or less where they were. A more telling set of facts emerges from a survey of Rural Credit which was made some years ago. Co-operative Credit societies had been established at the beginning of the century. The movement progressed. The number of societies grew steadily and in order to finance them banks were set up at district headquarters and at the capitals of the States. Members were everywhere encouraged to come together and guarantee one another's liabilities on lines which Raiffeisen had found suitable for the Germany of the early 19th century. There was much administration and supervision which, while indifferent in some States, was competent in others. Nevertheless, the survey revealed that for India as a whole, the total loans which co-operatives gave to the farmers were 3 per cent of the total borrowings from all sources. Indeed some 80 per cent of the finances still came from moneylender, trader and landlord. Investigating the reasons, the Committee came to an interesting conclusion about the social economic structure of rural India. They said in effect that two major factors, one the operation of a colonial economy for 150 years, and the second the implications of the centuries-old institution of caste had so affected this structure that the weak had become very weak and, in comparison, the strong, very strong. In their words, "the failure of co-operative credit is explicable in terms of the total impracticability of any attempt to combine the very weak in competition with the very strong and expect them by themselves to create conditions, firstly for their emancipation from the interests which oppose them, and secondly for their social and economic development in the context of the severe disadvantages historically imposed on them by a structure of the type described. The problem is not so much one of reorganisation of co-operative credit as of the creation of new conditions in which it can operate effectively and for the benefit of the weaker."

III. COLONIAL ECONOMY AND ITS EFFECTS

What, it may be asked, is the exact relevance of a colonial economy in this context? In reply, I will quote from the same report of the All-India Rural Credit Survey.¹ I make no apology for giving a rather extensive quotation, for it constitutes at the same time a concise statement of an aspect which is not readily recognised:

In India today there is an aggregate of private financial power, which in point of location is largely urban and—what is more important—in point of bias, that is to say, of the practices, attitudes, preferences and interests of the individuals and institutions who share the power, is almost wholly urban-minded. In appreciable degree, this may be regarded as the heritage of a colonial economy, which, seated in the bigger ports and cities, drew to itself for export abroad the raw materials—the “cash crops”—of the rural area, and which, in that process, signified also the advent of the cash economy to the country-side; certainly, in the details of its interpenetration from city to town and from town to village and in its main ramifications in the rural area it drew sustenance from the hoary inequities of caste and class and privilege. The cash economy brought with it changes which had inevitably to come to the rural area; for, the advent of the economy itself—irrespective of the historical accident of its colonial origin in this country—was inescapable in the conditions of the modern world. Money and the use of money assumed much larger significance than before even in those “subsistence” areas, usually also the remoter rural areas, where payments and transactions in kind, including a residual extent of barter, were significantly prevalent. As a rule, however, the powerful interests of export succeeded in imposing the cash economy only within the periphery of their own transactions with the rural economy. In the cities and towns grew up bodies which were ancillary to the main institutions of export trade and finance.

These subsidiary elements consisted of banks, firms, trading houses and individuals—agents, financiers, etc.—representing the indigenous interests which found it profitable to work for or in conjunction with the more powerful foreign institutions, into many of which, indeed, they later found entry and which in some instances they even replaced. Lower down in the rural area was the village money-lender and the village trader, often the same individual, as well as the small-town moneylender and the small-town trader or commission agent, again often the same individual, who also aligned themselves to, for indeed they were the necessary instruments of, the new economic system which rapidly invaded the old. Where there was self-sufficiency before, these forces of commercialization worked for the larger production and outflow of the particular commodities—cotton, jute, etc.—which were originally needed for export to the big manufacturing centres abroad and at a later stage for the urban industries which had meanwhile grown up within the country itself. Large tract of the country retained their character as food crop or subsistence economies. But they too were affected in varying degrees

¹ P. 274-275 of the General Report, 1954 (published by the Reserve Bank of India).

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by the new cash needs imposed on them through the gradual disruption of the older self-sufficiency. At the same time, the banking institutions of the commercialized economy were little interested in these areas, and in them the moneylender, as distinguished from the trader in cash crops, assumed greater power and importance than elsewhere. In its industrial aspect, rural self-sufficiency had been affected even earlier, since, for one thing, the products of cottage industries had to compete with those of organized industry, foreign and indigenous. The reaction of those who sought to advocate a return to the old order was wholly unrealistic. Much more to the point would have been a planned and determined attempt on the part of the State to minimize the socio-economic effects of the new and inevitable forces on the millions of people adversely affected by an unplanned transition from one order to another.

Elsewhere, discussing the same subject of the relative failure of co-operative credit in India, the Committee adds:

The main causes are much deeper. They are largely socio-economic in character and are relatable to certain fundamental weaknesses which have developed in the rural structure. Some of the factors making for weakness, such as caste, have always been there; some of the weaknesses are inherent in most agricultural economies, especially those which consist of small units of operation together covering a vast area; but the features most significant in this context are those which have emerged from the combined impact of commercial colonialism, industrialization and urbanization on these pre-existing conditions. As a result of all the three has been imposed for nearly one hundred years, a powerful, urban and highly monetized economy on a rural structure which had economically been self-sufficient and which socially continued to be based on caste. In its origin, the monetized economy was associated with colonial commerce; the latter was supported by colonial rule and administration; with such commerce and administration were associated big financial institutions such as banks and trading houses. In its development, this monetized economy derived strength and support from all these and in particular from the financial institutions which indeed were its accompaniment. The colonial rule underwent transformations; it became more and more beneficent in its objectives as well as more and more democratic in its character, till finally it gave place to full independence and democracy. However, the financial institutions associated with it or growing under its auspices have in character and functioning remained substantially unaltered. In their effect on the rural economy, in their relations to it and in their attitudes towards its real interests, there has been little change of any significance in the powerful institutions of industry, trade and finance.

IV. CASTE AND THE RURAL STRUCTURE

In the social and economic structure of the village, caste has a most important part to play. The village is by no means the homogeneous entity which it is sometimes imagined to be. It has classes as well as castes. It has the landed and the landless; the

rentier, the tenant and the labourer; the cultivator and the artisan; the petty official, the moneylender and the trader. Quite often the landless and the labourer are one caste, the landlord and the moneylender another and so on. Class, caste and occupation are usually interrelated. The economic and administrative implications of all this is brought out in the following passage from the report of the Rural Credit Survey:

It is not only the urban-induced power of the private moneylender and the private trader that affects the success of co-operatives when it manifests itself either inside or outside the society. Affinity is not confined to these two; it extends to the leadership in the village, whether this is based on property or derived from connection with the administration. The bigger landlord has ways which conform with those of the moneylender, and indeed, as we have said, he is often the moneylender or trader himself. The village headman is also drawn from the same class, and it is usual for these to have connections which link them not only to the sources of finance but to the seats of administrative power. ...Acting in concert with these (the more powerful elements in the village), the subordinate official, whose functions take him to the village, creates for the benefit of the superior officers what might be called the illusion of implementation woven round the reality of non compliance. Several factors in the village help to create this effect, not least among them the powerful influence of caste. If the leader is of a particular caste, it is unusual for others of the same caste in the village to report to superior authority that things are otherwise than as reported by the leader and the subordinate official. This marked tendency towards the promotion of an impression of change around changelessness, of active obedience to behests around stolid resistance to instructions, which only the most persistent and detailed supervision from above can check, has always to be taken into account in assessing the worth of reports that the policies of Government have been put into operation in the village.The *status quo* and the non-compliance are often achieved conjointly and at great effort by the leading elements in the village and the subordinate agencies of Government. The balance attained may be the result of some completely new alignment of forces, of some new distribution of perquisites or of some new passing of "consideration." The persons who suffer in this process are the weaker and disadvantaged elements of the village for whose benefit the directives and policies are conceived. Among the combinations of factors which thus operate against the interests of the bulk of those who reside in the village is the rigidity of caste feeling in conjunction with the power derived from money, land, leadership, and above all the affiliation with the superior forces of urban economy. The rigidity of caste loyalty remains, while the original division of caste functions no longer does. The result is that the landlord who may also be moneylender, the moneylender who may also be trader and the educated person who may also be subordinate official, all these through their association with the outside urban world of finance and power wield an influence in the village which at many points is diverted from the good of the village to the benefit of the caste or even of a close circle of relatives.

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I may perhaps add a couple of quotations, one from "Ambassador's Report" by Mr. Chester Bowles and the other from the unofficial report of an experienced social investigator:

In general, tenancy regulations are unworkable because the landlord is still left in a powerful position. Often he is the only literate man in the village. In the Punjab, where tenants who have tilled a certain plot for five years were finally given permanent tenure, I have been in villages where the records show that no tenant has tilled the same piece of land for more than two or three years! The village head and his associates, who owned most of the land, were able to juggle the books because he alone knew how to read them.²

The existing rigid social, stratification should not be forgotten. For centuries, land-owners and tenants may live nearby but have no close intimacy for sympathetic understanding of their day-to-day needs. Nearness alone does not impart mutual knowledge. Again, close contacts among castes create an affinity which cuts across cooperative loyalties ...Backward communities are tied to their old-world ceremonies, priests and caste rules. Their range of contacts is little. They are less susceptible to new ideas. They have little desire to improve their standard of life.³

V. CASTE IN THE TRADITIONAL FRAMEWORK

It is no part of my task to explain, justify or condemn caste. While its persistence, rigidity and ubiquity make the institution peculiar to India, comparable divisions of society are, of course, not unknown in other countries, especially of the East. The divisions are hereditary, often specialise in some one occupation, and rarely marry outside the group. What distinguishes India is that *all* society can be so divided, that the divisions are numerous and that in origin at any rate, if not in present operation, they can be fitted into one integrated framework which is at once social, religious and traditional. It is these divisions or "sub-castes" which should be studied in the context of a transition from one set of social purposes and objectives to another. The study would be fascinating. It would include an examination of the loyalties within each sub-caste, the loyalties between sub-castes, in either case the duties and obligations involved and the sanctions behind them, and finally the forces—religious, social and economic—which fasten groups and individuals to, or on occasion loosen

² P. 195 of "Ambassador's Report".

³ Quoted from the late Mr. K. G. Sivaswamy on page 55 of the General Report of the All-India Rural Credit Survey.

them from, their special compartments in the framework as a whole. All I can do here is to pick up a few strands and instances and illustrate my meaning.

According to one estimate there are (or at one stage were) some 3,000 sub-castes in India. Each of them is an endogamous group with prohibitions not only against inter-marriage (strictly), but also against inter-dining (not so strictly) with members of other groups. These in a sense are the real castes, for their classification into the four main occupational groups of Brahmin (priest), Kshatriya (warrior), Vaishya (merchant) and Sudra (worker) is more a logical than a sociological categorisation. But taking the bigger group, say Brahmin, not in terms of India—for that would be very unreal—but of a region in which one common language is spoken, the subdivision into smaller endogamous groups or sub-castes is along three specific lines; first sectarian, second territorial and third occupational. We may consider the concrete instance of the Andhra Brahmin, who belongs to the Telugu-speaking State called Andhra Pradesh. There is first a two-fold sectarian division into Vaishnavites and Smarthas, that is broadly speaking, worshippers of Vishnu and Siva respectively. Each of these can then be sub-divided in accordance with the territory of origin. Thus the "Venginadus" among Smarthas claim to have migrated from the Vengi country in the State, whereas the "Telaganyas" give their original home as the Trilangam country in the same State, and so forth. Each of these, in turn, may be classed as either "Vaidikis" (i.e. priests, the word itself being derived from "veda"), or "Niyogis" (i.e. those who pursue secular professions, being village accountants, revenue officials, etc.). The final sub-caste may thus consist of all those Telugu-speaking Brahmins whose ancestors were priests (occupational), came from Vengi (territorial), and were worshippers of Siva (sectarian). The attributes thus belong to one's ancestors, not necessarily to oneself. Nevertheless, the loyalties which then took shape may continue through generations, diminishing, no doubt, but not quite disappearing, even though one may meanwhile have forgotten one's place of origin, changed one's ancestral occupation and long ceased to worship either Vishnu or Siva. My illustration concerns the Brahmin, but similar examples can be cited of Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras.

But is there any underlying principle which broadly integrates the innumerable sub-groups and the four compendious main groups together? There can be no simple answer. Indeed, there must be many answers. But in illustration of one of these I will cite the legend of Kanyaka Parameshwari or the "Girl Goddess". She is the presiding deity of Komatis, that is the Vaishyas (merchants) of Andhra Pradesh. The young girl, so runs the legend, was intensely religious, treated Brahmins with reverence and every one with consideration. She was remarkable in many ways, not least for beauty. The neighbouring king, a Kshatriya called Vishnuvardhana, wanted to marry her and was prepared to enforce his wish by force. She said that she would immolate herself rather than break the integrity of caste. Among the leaders of the Komati community, some actively supported the stand taken by the young girl, some were indifferent, while still others were afraid of the ruler. The legend goes on to say that before she threw herself into the fire Kanyaka Parameshwari divided all Komati families into the existing sub-castes among them. This she did on the basis of those who helped her, those who had remained neutral and those who had been found wanting in courage. She also gave the Komatis a code of conduct defining their duties towards Brahmins, their respect for other communities and finally the rules of behaviour and social intercourse which should govern the sub-groups *inter se*. To this day, the code attributed to this deified young woman, Kanyaka Parameshwari, is held in high esteem by the entire community of Komatis and regulates the conduct of the more orthodox among them.

To complete the picture, one might consider the two begging sub-castes of "Viramushtis" and "Mailaris" who live in the same part of the country. Much lower in the social hierarchy, they are nevertheless attached by tradition in a very special manner to the Komatis. Legend has it that these two sub-castes are descended from the messengers whom Kanyaka Parameshwari sent in protest to the neighbouring Kshatriya ruler. The most interesting fact, however, is that at stated seasons of the year, coinciding with different festivals in honour of the Goddess, people of these begging castes visit the houses of Komatis in different parts of the State, carry images of the Goddess from house to house and sing traditional songs in her praise. Their hereditary function, in other

words, is to keep the memory of the Goddess and, therefore, the essence of the tradition alive in such a manner that not only the educated men of the community, but also the illiterate, the women and the children are periodically reminded of the religious and traditional background.

All this adds up to merely one small instance of a kind which can be multiplied a thousand-fold for different communities in different parts of India. Underlying the relationship between groups and sub-groups, castes and sub-castes, is an integrating principle based on the religion and values of the Hindus. Implicitly, if not explicitly, the social organisation is knitted together for the preservation of these objectives and values. The sanctions are social and religious while the values and the culture are reinforced by song, dance, myth and legend carried to the doors of every individual family within each relevant division of the organisation.

VI. TRADITIONAL VALUES

What are the traditional values which may be regarded as generally and more specifically Hindu? Any attempt to set them out briefly must, of course, involve a large amount of over-simplification. It would also raise the question whether the values are shared by a large number of people, illiterate and educated, rural and urban. It is very necessary to make one clarification at this stage. The values of the religion and philosophy of the Hindus are far from being confined to a small coterie, priestly, learned or other. Mass communication, which I have tried to illustrate by a few examples, has operated through the centuries and throughout the country. Indeed, the illiterate farmer in the village and the uneducated grand-mother in the family often know more about the saints and their deeds, the philosophers and their concepts, than the educated town-dweller or westernised businessman. Few who know India will dispute the statement that some of the most abstruse schools of philosophy such as *advaita* (non-dualism) are by no means unfamiliar ground to the Indian villager. Moreover, whether villager or townsman, the temperament of the Indian has, throughout the ages, responded readily to saintliness of character. This does not, of course, mean that the average Indian is either

more spiritual or more ethical than the rest of the world. A man may be no more moral than his neighbour, and indeed may be worse; but when it comes to what moves him most, the answer might be: not a successful businessman, not a great commander, nor even a great politician, but one who has renounced for the sake of helping others. This may be no more than a feature of the temperament, but it is an important feature and has to be taken into account in any assessment of the values held dear by Hindu society as a whole.

The emphasis is first of all on individual liberation (*mukti*). Man is part of the same process as brought forth the universe. Being part of the process he shares in some measure the nature of the creative force behind creation, just as, being part of the result of the process, he partakes of the nature of manifested creation. Far from being a stranger in a world he has not made, he is himself the maker, himself the world. His religion teaches him that progress involves not only a direction but a starting point. His starting point is himself. He is what he is today because of his past. But he is infinitely perfectible and perfection consists in that full development of his spiritual faculties which will make him in some ineffable way once more a part of the creative force of the universe. This is *mukti* which is both his goal and his destiny.

Since the starting point is himself, his religion depends on himself. The approach to progress must be pragmatic. If he is emotional, it will be the way of *bhakti*; if intellectual, the way of *jnana*, and if given to works, the way of *karma*. There is no need to go out and seek a formula of salvation; the sect of religion in which he is born is good enough; all that is necessary is that he practise his particular religion to the utmost.

Since all men will ultimately be liberated, all men are potentially equal. If they start now at different points and have different handicaps, that is the result of the past. It is the past that has determined their caste, their status and their individual equipment, spiritual, moral and intellectual. One must be practical and build upon this the best way one can. Sometimes the developed spirit breaks through all these and a saint manifests himself whatever the caste or the station. But that does not nullify either the fact or the value of the hierarchy of caste.

Dharma, or "duty" as it is loosely translated, has relation both to where one stands in the universe and to the direction in which one has to proceed. It takes into account the total environment of caste, parentage, inner qualities and so on. But it is nevertheless in the final analysis intensely individual. Granted the reality of a spiritual goal, what should one do in a given situation so as to proceed towards and not away from the goal? The milieu and the moment are no less internal than external to man. These being given, what he ought to do constitutes the *dharmā* of the man.

The values which the Hindu must most prize are partly those which go with his station in life, such as courage if a warrior, austerity if a Brahmin and so on. There are others which are universal. Among the most important of these are tolerance, detachment and loving-kindness. Since men are situated differently and are bound to progress differently there must be tolerance for all. One has to act, but the results of action are not important. One must be detached in one's attitude towards results. Since all men are united in origin and united in destination, one must have an attitude of "equal-mindedness" (*samabuddhi*) towards all. This applies not only to human beings but to all living things and indeed to all created things.

Some of the implications of these attitudes, however noble or praiseworthy in themselves, are not difficult to see. The tolerance can become mere passivity: the detachment, indifference; and the loving-kindness, sentimentality. Most important of all, the emphasis on individual development and liberation, coupled with the small group within which social loyalties are exercised, may result in the lack of a social purpose and a social philosophy, as distinguished from the merely religious and ethical. It would seem that at different stages in India's long history something like this has indeed happened. Equality at the philosophical level has not meant social equality, much less the positive aim of readjusting economic inequalities. It is also a comparatively new thing for Indians to think in terms of economic objectives as worthwhile goals in themselves, not only for individuals but for society as a whole. To work with one's hands, to produce, to organise production for the community, to take pride in increase in production, all these are values which are only slowly being adopted.

We have here then the picture of a society hierarchical in

structure. Each part of the structure is fitted into the whole with what would seem an underlying purpose basically connected with the objectives and values of the Hindu religion. The sanctions which preserve the structure and its individual parts are primarily social and religious. It is this structure that has now to be geared to socio-economic values instead of purely religious ones. It is to be actuated by new objectives, hitherto foreign to it, such as individual liberty, economic welfare and social justice. There is no use slurring over the fact that these are indeed new values and objectives for which the historical development of the structure had not prepared it. At the same time, on the credit side, it has to be recognised that the philosophical concepts of the tradition are in no sense and at no point antagonistic to these values. Indeed, in their own plane they may be said to be complementary to the new socio-economic objectives of plenitude and equality.

Another point may be mentioned. Hindu philosophy and religion are uniquely consistent with the most modern trends in science. The Hindu need have no dichotomy of mind, one of blind faith and the other of rational thought. He is brought up to believe that the material and the spiritual grow out of one another and that he himself partakes of the nature of both. There is no specific formula which he is asked to adopt as part of his belief. There is spiritual reality around him even as there is physical reality. It is up to him to understand the laws of both, and in conformity with those laws, strive for self-fulfilment. Since the moral laws of development and the physical laws of process are derived from the same reality, at no point of time can there be an irreconcilable inconsistency between the two. Nor, in a universe so integrated, can one in being true to oneself run the danger of being false to someone else.

But even if one has succeeded in discovering the moral or spiritual laws of individual development (as in the principles of yoga), what about the corresponding laws which govern society? Individual *dharma* may be all right, but in a world of social groups may it not prove to be as notional as a point in three-dimensional geometry? Is there no need in the modern world to pursue the complementary line of enquiry and discipline which concerns social *dharma* and institutional *dharma* as distinguished from individual *dharma*? And if the spiritual world is worthy

of study because the physical world is implicit in it, is not the physical world as worthy of study because the spiritual world is implicit in it? Briefly, the Hindu has yet to realise that the values of his philosophy are in tune with only a part of the infinite and that the parts to which it is yet to be attuned are precisely the ones which the modern mind has most explored and to which modern development is most beholden, namely the relationship between man and the universe which has given rise to the physical sciences, and the relationship between man and men which has given rise to the social sciences.

VII. TRENDS

No one can hope to discern the contours of the future without looking back at the formations of the past. In India's long history there have been rebels against priestly monopoly, reformers of religion and society, and re-interpreters of those values and loyalties which transcend sect, cast and occupation. The greatest of them all was Buddha; but he is only the most outstanding peak of a whole range of heights which never ceases through the centuries down to the present day. The rebels and reformers were at the same time saints or seers or the singers of the glory of God. Most of them attempted to reconcile caste with human brotherhood at the spiritual, emotional or philosophical levels. But there were signal exceptions like Basava (12th century), himself a Brahmin, who hoped to get immediate and practical results. He founded in the South an important sect which disowned the Brahmin. Basava tried to abolish caste through inter-marriage, but found the forces arrayed against him much too strong. In the 14th century Ramananda (North India) sang:

Jati panthi puchchai nahi koi
Hari ko bhaje to Hari ka hoi

(Let no one ask a man's caste or with whom he eats. If a man is devoted to Hari [God] he becomes Hari's own.)

Kabir, the weaver, also of the North, whose songs of the 15th century move men and women throughout India up to this day, said in one of his compositions:

I have forgotten both caste and lineage...
I have given up both the Pandits and the Mullahs...

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From neither have I received advantage...
My heart being pure, I have seen the Lord :
Kabir having searched and searched himself, hath
found God within him

There may also be cited Sankaradeva, whose work for the re-establishment of the worship of God and affection for all men had a tremendous impact on Assam during the latter part of the 15th and the earlier half of the 16th centuries. Vemana, the Telugu poet of the South, whose poems have passed into proverbs, said in the 16th century :

Food or caste or place of birth
Cannot alter human worth
... ..
Empty is a caste-dispute
All the castes have but one root.⁴

Also in the 16th century lived Eknath of Maharashtra whose practice of the equality of men is remembered today, not only through his songs, but in the many legends handed down about his life. Examples can be multiplied of this philosophical and individual rejection of caste by seers and teachers throughout the centuries. It will suffice to give one more quotation. This is from Narayana Guru of Nerala who died in 1928 and whose teachings and following today constitute one of the strongest ethical forces in that State :

One of kind, one of faith, and one in God is man;
Of one womb, of one form, difference herein none.
... ..
The community of man thus viewed to a single caste belongs.

The trend I have illustrated was not only indigenous, but represented the reaction to something, viz. caste, which was internal to the structure itself. It is necessary to consider another set of reactions namely those which originated in response to the impact of a strong foreign culture, the one which the British brought with them to India in the form of western thought and literature and political forms. Some four or five stages can, I think, be discerned in the reaction of Hindu society to this tremendous

⁴ Gover's translation : "South Indian Folk Songs".

impact. It might seem fanciful, but it was almost as if the awakening took place by degrees and that different centres of the dormant culture came back to awareness one after another.

Chronologically, the influence of the West was first felt in Bengal, for Calcutta was the capital of India and English education on a significant scale, was earlier organised there than elsewhere in the country. To start with, there was complete absorption in the culture of the rulers. Educated Indians adopted and imitated that culture in all its aspects, spiritual, literary and so forth. This soon gave way to a positive reaction against the foreign culture. The first awakening that took place was in what one might describe as the spiritual layer of the country's consciousness. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Devendra Nath Tagore (the Poet's father) and others, exemplified this earliest phase of spiritual awakening of India's self. Ramakrishna, Vivekananda and others, continued and completed the process in later years.

Meanwhile, the second phase of the reaction had already begun. Indians were no longer content to imitate the literary forms of England and write verses and novels in a foreign language. The languages of the people, each of which had a rich heritage behind it, began to assert themselves. The second phase of the reaction was literary. Rabindranath Tagore was a good example of this phase. It must be remembered that he wrote in Bengali and the songs, many of them still untranslated, are sung by villagers in all parts of Bengal.

The third phase was social. Social reform became the slogan of the day. Questions such as caste, untouchability, remarriage of widows, pre-puberty marriage of girls, and so forth, assumed great importance. Educated Indians began to say that they should first reform their own society before entertaining political aspirations for responsible Government. "Should social reform or political reform come first?" was a favourite topic for debate in schools and colleges and the answer usually was "social reform".

The fourth phase of the reaction was definitely political. Tilak, Gandhi, and those who followed, were typical of this phase. Without independence, it was asserted, nothing could be achieved, not even social reform. Indians must be their own masters, and from the self-respect thus created everything else would follow. Yet here again, as particularly under Gandhi, the political struggle

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took a uniquely indigenous form, that is to say, a shape that was deliberately moulded after the thoughts and aspirations of Hindus in particular, and Indians generally. Intolerance for the foreign rule was to be combined with tolerance for the foreigner. There was to be neither hatred nor anger against him. Gandhi also insisted on *ahimsa* and non-violence though this was perhaps a Buddhist or Jain idea rather than a specifically Hindu one. The Gita teaches the pursuit of duty without desire for the fruits of action. And, in the Hindu context, this pursuit might well be violent as in the instance of Arjuna himself. It was Jainism and Buddhism that emphasised non-violence as an absolute virtue. Thereafter, the ideal did get interwoven, though the strands still show here and there, into the texture of Hindu thought and belief. Thus it was that Gandhi, deriving inspiration from his own culture and support from Christianity and Tolstoy, put *ahimsa* in the forefront of his political struggle.

The fifth phase commenced some years ago. From the spiritual, the literary, the social and the political, the stage now reached may be described as the awakening of the economic consciousness of the country. War, Independence and Planning, all these have combined to bring it about. More wealth is postulated as the aim, but along with it and not less importantly, better and more equitable distribution of wealth. There is thus for the first time, in India, a recognition of the social and economic objectives of what might be very broadly described as a "welfare state". It is no longer "mukti" or individual salvation which will suffice. The basis is no longer the individual, but the group and the society. The explicit objective is economic good, and no longer—or at any rate not necessarily—spiritual good.

VIII. TRANSITION

This last phase of all, the phase of economic development and equalitarianism, is also the most difficult. It poses issues which India has evaded throughout its long development. It raises problems of production and distribution which, for the time being at any rate, are more exigent in India's villages than in its cities and town. The production of more wealth is easy enough when it takes the form of a textile mill or a steel mill or even constructing

a big irrigation dam or a hydro-electric project. If sufficient initial help is forthcoming from abroad, in machinery mainly, and skills secondarily, India can take all this and much more in its stride. Undoubtedly, there will be many and by no means insignificant difficulties; but they will by and large add up to something which, though not resolved, is yet familiar, namely, the problem of readjustment of labour to urban conditions. Arising from this will be the major issue of decentralisation of industry: the question of taking industry to where the worker is situated—the small town and the village—rather than the worker to where the industry is situated. One is hardly entitled to assume that such decentralisation can happen on any large scale, for limits are set by technical feasibility and the economics of scarce capital. Nevertheless, it is a vital issue and needs study and investigation with specific reference to Indian conditions. But the main problem, the one which concerns the bulk of the population, will still remain, namely, how the underfed and the underprivileged—the small cultivator in his millions and the small industrialist in his hundreds of thousands—can be given the know-how, the resources and the incentive to produce more. The know-how perhaps presents the least difficulty. National Extension, Community Development, Small Industries Service Institutes, all these have been fairly successful in organising and passing on the know-how, though it is true that a great deal has yet to be done. In particular, it will be education itself, i.e. the conversion of the illiterate into the educated—not the unskilled into the skilled—that is the big task still to be completed. Along with this lack of education, then, must be taken the other main impediments, which are lack of incentive and lack of resources.

The question may now be put: how are these three lacks being met, viz. lack of education, lack of incentive and lack of resources, all of which stand directly in the way of increased production? On the answer to this question more than on anything else will depend the effectiveness of India's transition from a traditional to a modern mass society. But the question of course cannot stop there. We shall further have to ask whether in the process of meeting these requirements: 1) the weak and the underprivileged are being helped; 2) bridges are being built across the old divisions of caste and sub-caste; and 3) traditional values such as tolerance, non-injury and reverence for the other-worldly are not losing their importance.

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The problem is by no means simple. For one thing, it is not posed in the manner stated above by many of those who are most concerned with its different aspects, namely, the politician and the legislator, the planner and the administrator, the educationist and the social worker. Nevertheless, one can observe trends and, however faint these may be for the moment, one can try and pick up from among them such as seem significant for the future. One may start with almost any of the aspects mentioned above. Caste, for example, evokes different responses from different sets of people. There are those who, in effect, exploit caste to gain temporary ends. Others ignore it or pretend it does not exist. Still others believe it will vanish under the impact of economic forces. Lastly, there are those who realise both the strength and ubiquity of caste divisions and seek to establish newer loyalties across, instead of along, them.

An obvious example of exploitation of the existing divisions is what happens during elections. The candidate may not always have willed it to be so, but it is common knowledge that in most elections the voting tends to take place along the lines of caste. In other words, caste, as one of the strongest existing loyalties, is something which no electioneering agent is likely to lose sight of.

There are those who ignore caste or believe that it will succumb to economic forces. They minimise the problem. It is true that the forces of economic development, including urbanisation, are on the whole hostile to caste. Broken up into individual elements, the loyalties of caste, we have seen, are principally sectarian, territorial and occupational. The hold of sectarian religion is getting less in the towns, but not necessarily nor on any appreciable scale in the villages. Territorial loyalty counts for less in the villages and much less in the towns than in the past. But there is a vicious circle. Caste restricts the mobility of the society; lack of mobility keeps people at home in their occupations; and those who remain at home tend to have a stronger territorial loyalty than others. The same remarks apply to occupational loyalty. In all these respects, therefore, the old loyalties of caste and sub-caste are only slowly weakening and it is by no means clear that they will disappear with the mere efflux of time and economic change.

Those who ignore caste instead of recognising it and dealing with it are doing a disservice. This applies to those who believe not

only that a village can in due course be made into a homogeneous entity, but that it is one here and now. They read into the village community a social cohesion and a common purpose which ought to be created, but which quite often are not there today. The fallacy involved in this attitude is dangerous because it may lead the administration to impose schemes of welfare on the village in the expectation that its leadership has the same interests at heart as the small farmer, the landless labourer and the harijan. Where this is not the case a well-meaning scheme may lead to greater exploitation along the lines of caste by those who are more powerful in the village. The result will be an accentuation, not a reconciling of differences.

There is no alternative but to make positive, purposeful and persistent efforts to build bridges, to create new loyalties or invoke traditional loyalties which transcend these divisions. Such efforts are in fact being made; many of them are humble and obscure; some are well known, while still others have to be brought to light from between the covers of official records and publications. A few of them may be cited. The illustrations are also concerned with the lacks I have mentioned before, viz. education, incentive to produce and resources for production.

In regard to education, I will confine my illustration to one of many pioneers in different parts of India who, during the last fifty years, and more especially after Independence, have rendered signal service in this field. I refer to an educationist⁵ of Maharashtra, who before his death a few years ago succeeded in giving schools to the rural area on a scale which neither government nor school boards had achieved in the past. What is more important, he was able to get Harijan and high caste boys to live, work and study together. At a very early stage in the experiment, he abandoned the idea of having separate hostels for Harijan boys. Ignoring the divisions of caste, sub-caste and out-caste he postulated poverty as the line of demarcation and said that every poor student in the countryside would be the beneficiary of his scheme. He also insisted on the contribution of voluntary labour by his students and maximum self-help on the part of each particular area. In this way he

⁵ Bhaurao Patil: See his biography by Dr. A. V. Mathew, *Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil*, Rayat Shikshan Sanstha, Satara, 1957.

built schools and hostels which, for both number and usefulness, are today among the most significant institutions in Western India. In these institutions, which include about 200 primary schools and a dozen or more boarding houses, the experiment is being successfully tried of students habitually and purposefully ignoring the divisions of caste and recognising the uniting factors of poverty and self-help. This remarkable man was rooted in the soil, had an essentially religious outlook, and renounced wealth in the best Indian tradition. Examples can also be cited from other parts of the country of the attempt to organise education as a unifying force. These attempts are usually not all-India. They are indigenous to the area or the State and have done much to spread literacy in the language of each particular region. And, it must be remembered, that for each of the big States of India as they exist today, its own language and literature are great unifying forces which cut across the barriers of rank, caste and occupation.

Incentive for production explains much of the agrarian legislation which, after Independence, has taken place in India. Feudal tenures have been abolished, rents have been regulated, ceilings are being placed on what a landlord may own and "land to the tiller" has been the formula generally adopted by State Governments. What is laid down in the statute is not necessarily what takes place in the field, as I have already indicated. Allowing for evasion and non-fulfilment, the fact still remains that it has been possible to bring about a radical re-adjustment of agrarian rights without recourse to violence.

Another development, and one directly in keeping with India's traditional values, is the mission undertaken by Vinoba Bhave to receive gifts of land (*bhoodan*) for distribution to the landless and, if all the land of the village was given (*gramdan*), to place it under the management of the village council for the benefit of all. The whole world is watching this experiment which, from the point of view here set out, constitutes one of the most significant endeavours in India for bridging the differences of caste and class and community. It has not yet touched the town and the city. The Saint's appeal is to persons. In the villages of India today one still deals with persons. In cities and towns the individual is merged in the impersonal masses. There is big business, not the individual trader; big banks and not money lenders; and large ownership of

capital, not just a handful of landlords. Also people are much more hardened against the traditional values of life. This perhaps explains why Vinoba Bhave, in his attempt to employ an essentially religious technique for bringing about social and economic justice, has hitherto avoided the cities of wealth and citadels of power and confined his mission to the village. Another observation may be made. The redistribution of lands, however motivated, is in the end a concrete administrative process. It requires supporting legislation, administrative staff and legal documents in which intentions are reduced to enforceable form as in any other administrative measure, whether such measure emanates from a Saint or a Secretariat. Will India be able to show that the Saint and the Secretariat can work together? The question is still open.

My next illustration is in fact taken from Government. It concerns the policy of State partnership in co-operatives for the purpose of meeting the last of the requirements I have mentioned, namely resources or capital. Lacking these, the village co-operative, whether credit or marketing, is powerless against the competition of landlord, moneylender and trader. Yet it must be rendered strong in order that the small producer's interests are looked after and production as an aim is promoted. Lacking initial momentum the weak society falls back to ground; there has to be a force which will help it to get into orbit after breaking through a whole field of gravitation. In India the experiment is being tried of supplying this initial force through State partnership. The partnership is reversible; also it does not imply State interference. Since the society starts strong, it is in a position to render service at the very commencement; people will test it for a little while and then increasingly come in and buy shares; this will in due course enable the society to buy off Government's shares. This has not only been the theory but the practice as well. And, so far as one can judge, it appears to work. But the points I am concerned to make are these. India has not chosen the path of liquidating the moneylender and the landlord in order that their hold may disappear or competition cease. That would have been wholly repugnant to temperament and tradition. Nor has it thought it right, on the one side, that the State should run these institutions itself or, on the other, that the weak should be left to their own devices. My illustration, then, concerns a joint attempt of the State and

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the people, especially the weaker sections, to institutionalise services of great importance to production; and to do so in a manner which conforms both to the values of tradition and the principles of sound organisation.

One other aspect remains to be noticed. Built on the basis of State partnership there is a large number of producers' co-operatives today—such as sugar factories owned by the canegrowers or lift irrigation societies run by the riparian farmers—which are infusing a new type of loyalty, the loyalty of production, across the older stratification of caste. The producers are of many castes; but they combine in order to increase their production, or to process their produce for the market; they have no problem, as in a credit society, of apportioning scarce resources (often along the lines of caste or other extraneous loyalties); their status is purely that of producers: it is as producers that they put forth a common effort and it is as producers that they derive a common benefit. This again is a very significant way in which the newer co-operatives, with assistance from the State, are helping to build bridges across the old divisions and are doing so in the very context of modernising the methods of production, processing and preparation for the market.

IX. CONCLUSION

How can India, without losing anything of value in her ancient traditions, adapt herself to the modern context of efficient production, economic welfare and social justice? The transition is taking place. It is largely uncharted. I am conscious that, in pointing to a current here and a current there, I have given no answer to the question itself. It seems permissible to doubt whether a definitive answer can, in fact, be given. If there is no chart of the transition, there can be no blue print of the future. But there is one thing which, in accordance with one's own predilections, it may be possible to indicate, and that is the spirit in which India, if true to her traditions, ought to conduct the transition. I quote from the Rural Credit Survey Report.

...Assuming this larger purpose to have the twofold aspect of achieving wealth and securing its equitable distribution, the programme ...becomes inseparable, in its underlying concepts, not only from the end which is economic good, but from

the means to be employed in the attainment of the end. Those means, to be significant for India, have to conform to the values for the Indian tradition. One feature of that tradition may be recalled. At widely different times and in widely different parts of the country there have arisen religious leaders in India whose aim was spiritual good and whose endeavour it was to place within the reach of all the means of achieving such good. Each such effort was non-violently conceived and non-violently conducted; it had the appeal and motive force of a mission; and, not infrequently, its organisation bore signs of careful forethought and attention. Essentially the same means, employed in the pursuit of economic good, have perhaps this difference, that they hold greater promise of attaining the object postulated. For one thing, there is nothing yet in human history to disprove—just as there is nothing in it yet to demonstrate—that economic welfare in its highest sense cannot be achieved, even where it is most lacking, by the planned, deliberate and organised effort of a Government, relentless as to purpose but not ruthless as to means, provided the effort is not only emotionally impelled but is scientifically guided. In this latter aspect, a whole apparatus of technique, knowledge and research, comparatively recent and painstakingly accumulated, is available to Governments if only they will make use of it, through the development of the social sciences of economics and sociology and of the science no less than art of public administration. It is irrelevant whether economic good is or is not a lesser objective than spiritual good. The fact remains that economic good is the highest practicable objective so far as Governments are concerned. In India, the process of increasing and more equitably distributing the economic good must, on purely rational grounds, be conceived in terms of rural India. The larger thesis... is that what India most needs today is a comprehensive and determined programme of rural regeneration which has the ethical impulse and emotional momentum of its highest traditions; which has, moreover, the calculated design of a project that is scientifically conceived and scientifically organised; and which, above all, attempts to render to rural India, in the economic realm, those opportunities for growth and fulfilment which, without distinction between man and man, but with especial compassion for the weak and the disadvantaged, more than one religious leader at more than one period of the country's history attempted to render to the masses of India in the realm of the spirit.

“STATIC” AND “DYNAMIC”

AS SOCIOLOGICAL CATEGORIES

The connection between static and dynamic forces in society became, once again, a topic for debate at the sociological congress held in Amsterdam in 1955. The reason for this renewed interest is not far to seek. Dynamic phenomena of great intensity force themselves on the observer of the contemporary scene. Within the Soviet sphere of influence, the structure of society is undergoing radical changes. At the same time, the Orient and all those areas said, not without reason, to be “developing,” are in the throes of modernization. And finally, even in countries ruled by liberalism and marked by stable institutions, the inner structure of such fundamental social concepts as “individual,” “family,” “stratification,” “organization” and “government” is rapidly being transformed. On the other hand, there are many countries in which society appears to be gravitating towards a static condition, characterized by Veblen more than fifty years ago, as a “new feudalism.” When all areas

Translated by H. Kaal.

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beyond the present-day borders of capitalism will have been industrialized, capitalism will no longer be able to rely on new resources elsewhere, and its economic expansion, which was once thought to be demanded by the very nature of the system, will have come to an end. Capitalism will then have to revert to simply reproducing itself. This prospect is reflected in our present-day culture. Thus, Olivier Messiaen, a composer of the group known as "La Jeune France," said only recently, that the historical development of music had reached a ceiling beyond which no further development could be imagined; whether he was right or not, is not the point. What should be of most interest in a discussion of the conflict between static and dynamic forces, is the question which of these will prove to be the stronger; whether the trend of development prevailing since the Middle Ages will continue, or whether it will terminate in a state of paralysis of the kind that Himmler prophesied when he said that the Third Reich would last for ten or twenty thousand years, until the "end of modern times." But before we can speculate about the outcome of the conflict between the static and dynamic, we must reflect on the ideas connected with them; otherwise it would be like trying to settle the course of world history by idly tossing a coin.

Comte was the first to outline a program for turning sociology into a special discipline, for making it academically independent, and for converting it into a systematic and classificatory science. It is well known that he demanded that, "in sociology we must ...make a sharp distinction, in the case of each political unit, between the study of the fundamental conditions of the existence of society, and the study of the fundamental laws governing the continued motion of the social body."¹

Accordingly, we should "divide...social physics into two main disciplines to be called, for example, social statics and social dynamics."² This "scientific dualism" should be the counterpart, in society, of the two universal principles: order and progress. "For it is obvious that the static study of the social organism must, at bottom, coincide with the positive theory of order; it is a fact that,

¹ Auguste Comte, *Cours de philosophie positive*, vol. IV, 5th ed. (Société positiviste d'enseignement populaire supérieur, Paris, 1893), p. 254.

² *Ibid.*

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in its very nature, this order can only consist in a perfect and permanent harmony between the various conditions of existence in human society. And it is even more obvious that the dynamic study of the collective life of mankind coincides necessarily with the positive theory of social progress; this theory must discard all vain ideas of absolute and unlimited perfectibility and reduce naturally to the simple idea of this fundamental development."³

It is true that an uncritical observer could discover static and dynamic types in society well into the twentieth century. The peasantry furnished the favorite model of the static type, while the capitalist economy provided a model of the dynamic type, since it was essentially expansive and dynamic. Anyone who wants to defend this classification, can invoke the entire tradition of Western philosophy, including the Socratic distinction between $\phi\acute{\upsilon}\sigma\epsilon\iota$ and $\theta\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\epsilon\iota$ —between the natural and the merely human. Social phenomena that could be traced back to primordial human needs or, to use the current jargon of the existentialists, to "existence," are thought to fall under static categories and to obey static laws; whereas modifications of these basic phenomena, that is, social forms created by special kinds of socialization, are thought to be dynamic. Implicit in this way of thinking is the assumption that the large and all-inclusive main structures remain, whereas their modifications, which are logically inferior to them, are subject to change. Anyone who embraces this assumption will, from the very beginning, downgrade the dynamic elements to the status of the accidental and look upon them as mere embellishments of the main categories. He will not even raise the question whether his main categories may not have been derived by choosing a particular society as a model, and whether this choice of model may not have eliminated everything incompatible with his view that there are invariant elements in society. His methodological conviction enables him to skirt such questions: All we need to do in order to obtain an initial solid classification of social phenomena is to hold on to criteria like the static and dynamic. Yet, it is a well-known fact, and one that has been stressed again and again by sociologists, that we are tempted to glorify metaphysically the static elements, and, in particular, the institutions, because of their

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 255-6.

alleged eternity, and to disparage, as changeable and accidental, the dynamic elements, and, thereby, that which gives concrete content to social change. Anyone who yields to this temptation will have that philosophical tradition behind him which identifies the essential with the permanent, and the merely phenomenal with the transitory.

Whether the distinction between the static and dynamic is imposed on actual societies out of classificatory needs or because of an underlying philosophy, the phenomena as such are by no means divided accordingly. The archaic method of scholasticism, rejected long ago by epistemologists, has slipped through the filter of criticism and survives in the very heart of modern science. Real things are still thought to be composed of parts like essence, accident, existence and the principle of individuation, and to be explicable by adding up such general concepts. No thought is given to the mind, intent on order, without whose mediation the parts would not fit together at all; they could not even be said to have any being of their own, unless one assumed *a priori* that society was neatly divided into elements of order and elements of progress.

Consider the proposition "All social authority rests on the appropriation of other men's labor" as an ideal "static law," that is, without regard to its truth or falsity; and similarly, as an ideal "dynamic law," the proposition "Under the feudal system, authority is exercised through the relationship of leaseholder to tenant." If we now examine the facts, we find that a tenant was certainly not subject to a general law of "authority as such" and, in addition, to a particular law of "authority through lease," the two being related like genus and differentia. The tenant did not first experience authority as such and then its historical mutation; all he experienced was the authority of the feudal lords, whether or not authority through lease should be subsumed, in sociology, under a general higher-order concept of authority. This is not just an epistemological subtlety; the question is whether some laws can be classified as invariant and others as variable, and whether we can conclude from this to the nature of society. Such conclusions would be illegitimate if the so-called "invariants" occurred only in the form of the "variants," and not in isolation or "in themselves." We would then be reading what is true of the

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classificatory scheme into the thing itself. The inclination to do this, and all its consequences, are to be found even among modern sociologists, as for example in Mannheim, who invented the concept of "mediating principles," and in the American sociologists who recently resurrected it, in order to bridge the gap between alleged general laws and the brute facts that refused to obey them, even though there is nothing that corresponds to these mediating principles in the interplay of social forces.

If the uncritical division of society into static and dynamic elements seems to have the blessings of common sense, this is due to the simple-mindedness with which common sense mirrors its own distinctions back onto the object. Nor can this division be justified by a classification of needs into natural and constant ones on the one hand, and those created by man and subject to historical change on the other; for this distinction is produced entirely by the process of classification and is, as such, abstract. Needs cannot simply be divided in this way, because society itself cannot be divided into needs without remainder. It is true that needs enter into the social process of self-preservation, whether of the individual or of the organic whole; but they enter only through this whole. What a man needs or does not need for life, is not simply determined by nature, but depends on the state of production, its conditions and its capacity. Any attempt to distil what is purely natural out of human needs is bound to miscarry. In modern society at least, and no doubt in many earlier ones, the needs of men do not determine the order of their lives, but are instead determined beforehand—unless, indeed, they are first created, as they are in our present era of over-production. To reduce the laws of our capitalistic society without qualification to human needs, and to divide these laws according to these needs into static and dynamic ones, would be to give undue prominence to the satisfaction of needs which is nowadays a mere by-product of our economic interests. As if the acquisition of three cars by a family of two came under the same category as the gathering of fruit by a horde of primitive fruit-pickers! Not only do many things prove to be dynamic which appear static to the naive observer; even needs that are undeniably primordial, like those for food, clothing and shelter, undergo such drastic changes that the quantity of new satisfactions may be transformed into the quality of what

had been mistaken for invariant. The social process is neither purely social nor purely natural; it is an exchange between man and nature—a permanent interaction between the two. The natural is to be found on every level, and cannot be excized from its social form without violence to the phenomena. Technical progress in the last few decades has mobilized everywhere those social groups that could still be regarded as fairly static in the nineteenth century, though only by shutting one's eyes to their prehistory. In particular, it has mobilized the remains of the agrarian society, and thus given the lie to dogmas like the one that the mechanization of agriculture could not proceed beyond the limits set by God when he created the free farmer for all eternity. The more the concept of the natural is undermined by research, the more the doctrine of invariants stiffens into a dogma of philosophical anthropology and resists application to concrete social phenomena. The doctrine may finally turn for justification to a kind of ontology which is credited, by highly specialized scientists, and in blind confidence, with a great deal of truth, but which cannot even stand up under philosophical criticism, and which is totally incompatible with the insight that society has not so much originated in the nature of men's being, as been imposed on them from without.

If we want to understand why sociology still clings tenaciously to such fabrications as the static laws, we must go back to their origin in Comte. Comte derived his division, first of "states" (*états*)⁴ and then of laws, into static and dynamic, from the needs of the scientists: "To this end we must, first of all, extend to the whole of social phenomena a truly fundamental scientific distinction. I have drawn and used this distinction in all parts of this treatise, and especially in biological philosophy; for it is, by its very nature, wholly applicable to any phenomena whatsoever, and above all, to the phenomena presented by living bodies. I have considered separately, but always with a view to a precise systematic co-ordination, the *static* and the *dynamic* aspect of the subject matter of every positive science."⁵ The necessity behind

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

⁵ *Ibid.*

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the initial "must" stems from Comte's conception of a pyramid of sciences culminating in sociology: A science which occupies a higher level in this hierarchy must do justice to the principles of all lower-level sciences as well. Since Comte's times, the positivists have been peddling a substitute for the system of the idealists; they cultivated the idea (which dates back to Leibnitz) of a universal science which would triumph by the unity of its method over the diversity of its subject matter. The principles of positivism had had the effect of decomposing the world into atomic facts which were independent of the mind and could be brought under concepts only by ignoring their complexity. This decomposition was to be counteracted by science, which was responsible for splitting up the world in the first place. The single method of universal science was to take the place of the single overarching universe which had been shattered irrevocably and broken up into disconnected "facts." Here lies the origin of the temptation to attribute to the facts, and, as it were, as their internal structure, distinctions which could only be derived by classifying these facts, and only on the assumption that they had no internal structure. What is justly ridiculed in Linnaeus' system, passes unopposed in sociology: The order of the categories appears as the nature of the thing itself. Whatever the nature of the thing may be, it is suppressed with proud impartiality, along with everything that does not fit in with what one supposed to be the case.

Comte's *Cours de philosophie positive*, a document from the wild pioneering days of positivism, shows only too clearly how the structure of things can be contaminated by the classificatory scheme of the scientist. Comte argues by analogy from the anatomical and physiological aspects of the organism to a corresponding distinction in society.⁶ It may well be that a biologist can make a distinction between those aspects that are specifically connected with "life," namely, the physiological ones, and those aspects that are not, namely, the anatomical ones. A sociologist, however, no matter how crude a nominalist he may be, is only concerned with living human relationships and with their derivatives—their congealed social forms. These form are to be derived from human relationships, and not to be hypostatized as "anato-

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

my." The static layer, which Comte tries to urge on us, enjoys no independent existence.

Comte was not so simple-minded as to overlook that the connection between order and progress, that is, their "intimate and indissoluble union will henceforth mark the fundamental difficulty...for every true political system."⁷ But his political inclinations and his method, which was an imitation of the method of the natural sciences, led him off the track. Because the over-all trend of development seemed to push bourgeois society towards its dissolution in anarchy, he was inclined to place order above progress, and static over dynamic laws, and remained content with the dogmatic assertion that "this important consideration... could in no way affect either the intrinsic correctness of, or the immediate necessity for, our fundamental distinction between the static and the dynamic approach to social phenomena."⁸ Comte raises, but peremptorily rejects, the question whether that objection did not show his distinction to be after all, "the source of a faulty or pedantic division into two separate sciences."⁹

Even more implausible is Comte's famous identification of these two categories with the categories of order and progress. He makes implicit use of the criteria of concept formation which are at home in the natural sciences, and assumes without hesitation, that anything which is essential to society must work for its preservation. From the beginning, he excludes categories that imply the dissolution or destruction of the order to which they apply—as for example, impoverishment and the inability of an agrarian society to perpetuate itself in the event of a rapid increase in population. A sociologist who adopted the natural sciences as model would have to take as much account of such possibilities as of the opposite ones; otherwise he would be violating one of his own principles—that of completeness. Even if we concede to Comte that no matter how society is constituted, the reproduction of the species has precedence over all other social factors, including the tendencies towards disintegration, we need not agree with him that the forces of history aim necessarily at preservation of

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 255.

⁹ *Ibid.*

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the species. Society as a whole breeds forces which threaten to bring it to a violent end. Comte himself was one of the first to stress the "destructive" tendencies in it. Yet it is these very tendencies, the true object of his theoretical interest, which he left out of his system. Hence the conflict between his system and the facts which he, as a positivist, had raised to a position of authority over ideas.

If Comte had reflected on social phenomena without prejudice, he would have realized that it was the static conditions that brought about the downfall of the Byzantine and the Ottoman empires. For static conditions produce, by reason of their immobility, the symptoms of paralysis which precede the ruin of the static order, especially where the static order is surrounded by a world of change. Conversely, if Comte had not placed arbitrary restrictions on the concept of a dynamic law, which were dictated *a priori* by his principles, he would have had to count as a dynamic law, the law of crises which governed a commercial society, left to its own devices and to the principles of liberalism. Crises could hardly be brought under the concept of progress without misrepresenting them. Comte's unhappy love affair with empiricism and the natural sciences blinded him to such considerations. He introduced concepts which seemed respectable enough when used in the natural sciences into sociology, without confronting them with the specific objects to which they were to be applied. Comte's work foreshadowed the fatal divergence between the productive use of scientific method and the uncritical promotion of this method to the rank of philosophy, which was to characterize the later phases of positivism. Comte tended to treat as things what were not things at all. By raising concepts to the status of supreme categories, he only meant to imitate the special sciences whose categories created no problems, either in their application to objects or in their relation to the thinking subject; but he confused the completed scientific apparatus with philosophy. This is why he treated society as the sum of static and dynamic elements, as if it were already composed of these two essential constituents and did not, first, have to be transformed so that the two could be combined in spite of their diversity.

That Comte should have overlooked the systematic discrepancies in his theory as well as its inadequacy to the facts, cannot

simply be explained by saying that his zealotry made him blind to science, for he was a zealous advocate of scientific method. The errors in his thought were, rather, dictated by his aims. What he dignified and extolled as the result of "irrevocable philosophical analysis,"¹⁰ and what he claimed to rest "on unshakeable rational foundations,"¹¹ was in fact what fitted in with his own interest. He himself was the first to point this out, in order to remove the suspicion of idle speculation, and to recommend himself as a practical man to the ruling powers of his day. He set himself the task of answering the "social question," which had been raised by the industrial revolution, by means of an "objective" science which stood above the class struggle—or, at least he tried to pass his own science off as such an answer. Comte's science had a function similar to Hegel's state:¹² "This first philosophical conception of a positive sociology has a natural and direct consequence, which is so obvious that it would seem superfluous to call special attention to it here. As I said at the beginning of this volume, the two ideas of order and progress, which are equally fundamental and whose deplorable and radical opposition constitutes, as we have seen..., the main characteristic symptom of profound disturbances in modern society, will henceforth be united in an indissoluble manner."¹³ Just as Hegel expected the state to smooth out the contradictions in society and to subdue the forces that, according to his own theory, sought to go beyond bourgeois society,¹⁴ so Comte, who was less aware than Hegel and less critical of the real weakness of human reason, looked for salvation to a kind of sociology which would bring social contradictions under concepts that were consistent with each other and with themselves. The static and dynamic laws were the crudest examples of such concepts. The neat division between them was a kind of preparation for striking a balance between them, first in science and

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

¹² Cf. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (ed. Lasson, Leipzig, 1921), p. 189 (Sects. 245-6).

¹³ Comte, *op. cit.*, pp. 257-8.

¹⁴ Cf. Hegel, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

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then in the real world. Neither Hegel nor Comte was aware that a society which was splitting up into factions might be transformed, by making use of the dynamic forces in it, into a higher form—a form worthier of human beings. Both sought to preserve it with all existing institutions intact; this is why Comte set up the static laws as a corrective for the dynamic ones. In this way, he openly expressed the doubts of the middle classes which, only a few decades earlier, had still maintained a revolutionary and even progressive attitude, though only for the sake of capitalist expansion. Now they found themselves in a position where they had to take account of the impoverished masses, and could only ward them off by adopting either a progressive or a conservative attitude, depending on the circumstances. From the very beginning, positivism had a practical as well as a theoretical purpose. Concealed behind its conceptual beginnings, and covered by their scientific dress, lay apologetic intentions. To make it appear reasonable that a society full of antagonism was destined to last, the antagonism could not be presented as such, nor could society be burdened with it. Progress and order were placed side by side in perfect amity, even though interest in the one was incompatible with interest in the other in its consequences. The two concepts were thought to be independent of each other, complementary to each other and politically neutral, and their main use was thought to lie in scientific classification. The tension between order and progress was released through sociological system-building even prior to all analysis of social phenomena, and the middle classes were thus reassured over the dilemma they had gotten into, between development and stabilization. The polar opposition in society between order and progress was weakened into an opposition between different points of view from which to classify phenomena; either point of view could, it seemed, be adopted at will. The separation of the static from the dynamic, which appeared to Comte as a practical need, was in reality an ideological need. These two concepts were "positive" in a second sense of the word: they "posited" the irrational as a rational principle of scientific classification. This was easily overlooked since the concepts appeared to be politically and socially neutral. But a theorist who insisted on his neutrality and held on, by the skin of his teeth, to the contention that he stood above all conflicts of interest,

was almost certain to be a servant of the ruling interests. The positivists were able to build their systems so as to house all their hidden purposes which were unknown even to themselves, by bringing the facts under their concepts in an extremely superficial, arbitrary and even slovenly manner, and by looking upon the subject matter of sociology, that is, the social system and its structure, as a mere conglomeration of facts, to be noted and then fitted into the scientific scheme. The positivists in the social sciences were conformists even before they modelled their methods on those of market research. This is why social scientists with more critical attitudes distrusted them from the beginning, even when the positivists posed as the more radical group.

The distinction between the static and dynamic is an ideological one, not only because of the purpose it serves, but because there is, in fact, less truth in it than has been claimed for it since Comte's times. Comte himself was of the opinion "that such a clear-cut division of the social sciences might bring down upon us a great evil: It might lead us to neglect, perversely, the indispensable task of combining these two general points of view in a permanent union; and this would fit in only too well with the tendency of our contemporaries to take everything apart."¹⁵ But his efforts to heal the breach afterwards, and to mediate between the two concepts, were all in vain because, afterwards, there was no way in which they could be brought together. If sociology seemed to demand a distinction between the static and dynamic, then the sociologist's task was *not* to look for a third principle between them, but to examine the connections between the two; for they needed no mediation since the one implied the other directly. Hegel's metaphysical view that becoming, or the totality of the dialectical process, contained as its dialectical moments being and, again, becoming, rested on an observation of social phenomena; and so did his view that being was inconceivable without becoming, and becoming without being. In society, everything that is, has become; it is "second nature;" and all becoming arises from that which is—from the defects in it and from the kind of things it is. The different ways in which

¹⁵ Comte, *op. cit.*, pp. 254-5. His complaint that analysis takes everything apart is probably addressed to the school of the *idéologues* whom Napoleon had already taken to task for this.

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Comte and Hegel conceived of the connection between the static and dynamic were reflected in their language. By a mere formal move—by placing the static and dynamic into separate sociological compartments—Comte almost succeeded in rendering the dynamic forces inactive. Hegel, on the other hand, infused dynamic force even into logical forms, the prototypes of invariability. Although Hegel's Greater Logic was primarily intended as a critique of the logic of predication, Hegel kept on using the subject-predicate formula throughout this work. Indeed, there is hardly another philosophical work which makes such capricious and obstinate use of the copula. Almost every sentence contains the categorical "is;" and yet it is the deceptive power of this "is" and its contention that anything *is* what is predicated of it, that Hegel is concerned to attack. The reason Hegel insists on simple predications is that, merely by insisting on them, we can prove that it is not sufficient to consider only the "static" aspect of a fact; for every "is" of this kind contains an "is not"—or in Hegel's language, every identity contains non-identity. Anything which appears to be static when we look for its defining characteristics, begins to teem with life, like a drop of water, when we examine it as if under a microscope. In the same way, the categorical assertion that something is thus and not otherwise, becomes dynamic when we give a minute description of its logical structure. To examine the "is," which discursive logic accepts at its face value, is to see that being is becoming in disguise, in the sense which "being" and "becoming" have initially in dialectical logic. Sociology cannot afford to ignore this insight. What a society *is*, and what traditional metaphysics is inclined to hypostatize as its "being," is precisely what propels it forward, whether for better or for worse. *That* a society is thus, in particular, and not otherwise contradicts *what* that society is, no less than the special interests which go to make up *what* it is. The eternal and immutable aspect of a society defines the nature of the dynamic forces in it. Thus, certain kinds of authority, denial and resignation have so far remained invariant in our society; and in Comte's ideal society, a certain kind of order, imposed on the living from without, would be eternal and immutable. We cannot hope to reconcile the static and dynamic under the "right" social conditions as long as we believe in a kind of order which

is achieved by imposing laws from without. Just as little can we hope to reconcile them if we believe in a kind of progress which remains inside the social order. As Kafka pointed out, this kind of progress has so far failed to take place. If it were to take place, it would be at the same time its own negation—a simultaneous regress.

If we were to accept the distinction, proposed by Max Weber and his German admirers, especially Sombart, between tradition-bound and rational types of society, we would be committed to a definition of rationality as the tendency to destroy traditional social forms. It would be rational to remove what had become in the course of history when it began to cause friction. Rationality would be a historical force even though it frequently opposed history. This is what many who speak of progress have in mind. But there is, on the other hand, something static and unhistorical about reason in its objective and objectifying form. There is this much truth in the contention that the rationalists of the eighteenth century were anti-historical. But this contention is certainly an oversimplification: The anti-historical attitude did not just appear in that period of intellectual history; nor could the rationalists of the enlightenment have made up their alleged deficiency, merely by reflecting on historical facts; for Vico and Montesquieu did just that. Rather, rationality has gradually been losing its power of memory which it once possessed to a high degree. This is borne out by Henry Ford's dictum "History is bunk" and, with pathological force, by recent events in Germany. The terrifying picture of mankind without memory is not just a symptom of decadence; nor is it just a sign that we are, as is sometimes said, overpowered by stimuli which we are no longer able to master. Lack of historical consciousness is more than that: It is the forerunner of a static society, in which the bourgeois principle of universal exchange and balanced accounts will triumph, and in which bourgeois rationality will reign supreme. Everything historical will be excluded from such a society: To balance accounts is to leave nothing unaccounted for; but the historical is essentially what cannot be accounted for. Again, to exchange commodities is to cancel one act by another; it is, thus, an essentially timeless activity although it takes place in time—not unlike a mathematical operation which is also, in its essential nature, out of time. In-

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dustrial production will also cease to be essentially temporal: It will proceed more and more in identical and potentially simultaneous cycles. As the distance between bourgeois rationality and feudal traditionalism increases, the methods of industrial production will be progressively rationalized. As a result, experience, time and memory will in the end be liquidated like an unnecessary mortgage. There will no longer be any need for the rudiments of craftsmanship or for a long apprenticeship—the paradigms of qualitative accumulated experience. If mankind, in its present phase, is indeed engaged in burying its memories, in order to adapt itself so much the better to every new condition it encounters, then this reflects an objective trend. Just as the dynamic force which stands behind the growing power of rationality over nature had to originate in a static condition, so it will have to end in a static condition. Rationality can only develop in a particular way. This is what the totalitarian state teaches us, with its unlimited power of oppressor over oppressed and its result—the tranquillity of the graveyard, which is the very opposite of peace. The blind rule of rationality over nature must conform to the age-old pattern of antagonism between ruler and ruled: The antagonism is not resolved when rationality swallows up its enemy, nature. The static tendencies which dwell within the dynamic social force that seeks to extend the rule of rationality over nature, are an indication that there is something false and persistently irrational about that force. Thus rationality, that is, the kind of reason that seeks to dominate nature, is itself irrational; it cannot but objectify and falsify, and it is on the side of those who would criticize reason itself. But rationality is not exempt from the vice which Comte and all opponents of metaphysics attributed to speculation; for speculation is not alone in being reactionary. Moreover, there can be no freedom without speculation; the positivists, who paid lip-service to freedom, were plotting to depose it all the while. Marx could have argued against the positivists what he argued against Feuerbach and the Hegelian Left in a truly Hegelian spirit—that his speculations made him the heir to classical German philosophy.

Marx introduced the distinction between the static and dynamic as part of his critique of fetishism. Having traced the origin of fetishism to the value we attach to commodities, he went on

to follow up all its theoretical ramifications. His basic theme was a Hegelian one, which he had translated back into sociological terms: What appears to *be* should be conceived as something that has *come* to be—or in Hegel's terminology, as something "mediated." What has come to be, and hence, everything that would come under the abstract concept of the static, is thus stripped of its pretensions to "being in itself." Instead of analyzing the form after it had congealed, Marx deduced the form from the historical process itself. By refusing to apply static categories to social conditions, he tried to escape the temptation to treat them as absolutes. All social forms and all "economic forms" were according to him "transitory and historical."¹⁶ Marx blamed Comte's false synthesis on a deification of what had merely come to be; Comte had brought together on the surface, what was held together underneath only by its incompatibility. Marx's racy polemics against Proudhon might just as well have been addressed to Comte: "The historical movement which shakes the modern world elicits from him nothing but the question how to restore its balance and to synthesize two bourgeois ideas. And so the bright lad discovers, by sheer cleverness, the hidden thoughts of God and thus, how to unite two isolated ideas—which are isolated only because he himself has isolated them from everyday life and actual production, in which the realities expressed by these ideas are combined."¹⁷ Marx reproached Proudhon for his "dualism" between "eternal ideas" or "categories of pure reason" and "men and their everyday lives,"¹⁸ which is the same as the dualism between the static and dynamic, both in content and methodological consequences. Marx criticized society in the same way in which he criticized its hand-maiden, sociological theory: "These ideas and categories are no more eternal than the conditions they express. They are historical, perishable, transitory products. We are surrounded by constant movement—the growth of productive forces, the destruction of social conditions, the for-

¹⁶ Karl Marx, *Das Elend der Philosophie* (ed. by Bernstein and Kautsky, Berlin 1952), p. 130.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

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mation of ideas. Nothing is immovable except what we abstract from this movement—*mors immortalis*."¹⁹

The last remark is meant ironically in this case; it portrays the abstract general concept of the static as the corpse of the dynamic social process. But it also points beyond its immediate object: Although Marx's nominalist convictions do not allow him to hypostatize abstractions, his reference to *mors immortalis* shows him to be dimly aware that an abstraction may also denote a social reality. Marx admits that there is something eternal in "prehistoric" society, though it is only the transitoriness of its forms and structures; these are eternally transitory because, as blind products of nature, they are subject to natural decay. Marx's dialectic includes, therefore, a doctrine of invariance, though it is only a kind of negative ontology of a society which advances through internal conflict. The dynamic aspects of society are, at the same time, its static aspects: Internal conflict provides the energy for change; but no change has taken place in this respect. Every productive relationship and every society have till now perished for the same reason. The urge to expand, to absorb more and more, and to leave out less and less, has so far remained static or invariant. In this way, every society has prepared its own fate: While it was trying to expand in order to avoid destruction, it was working unconsciously at its own destruction, and at the dissolution of the living whole of which it was composed. This was its only title to eternity. According to Marx, the end of "prehistoric" times will also be the end of such dynamic changes, and progress is already working towards this end. A better society will synthesize the static and dynamic which are now linked in a contradictory fashion: It will not seek to preserve what happens to *be*, to tie men down for the sake of order since no such fetters are needed when the interests of men coincide with those of society. Nor will it seek to perpetuate blind becoming, which is the opposite of Kant's aim of history—eternal peace.

Since what is happening gives the lie to Marx's predictions, we may suspect that not even he discarded altogether the old distinction between the static and dynamic, even though he liked to play off the dynamic force of labor (which he had made into

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

a central concept) against any allegedly static or invariant conditions. Marx placed the invariant laws of nature which governed society in general, side by side with the specific laws which governed a particular state in its development. Thus "the higher or lower degree to which social antagonisms have developed" appeared to be on the same level as the "natural laws of capitalist production."²⁰ This could hardly be explained by saying that Marx confused different levels of abstraction with different types of cause. He was, however, well aware that society is a product of nature: As long as men were not completely in control, either of themselves, or of society, the social process would continue in irrational cycles, in spite of all rationalizations. For Marx and, before him, Hegel, the dialectical movement of history could, in a sense, be summed up as permanent transition or unchanging change. With a kind of hope born of despair, Marx applied the term "prehistory" to no less than the entire stretch of history known to him—to what had been, and was, the realm of bondage. But, insofar as the dynamic forces reproduced the same pattern over and over again (as Anaximander had already claimed in his dictum, and after him, Heraclitus in his dynamic metaphysics), the dialectical process had to be described in terms of perennial categories, which needed only to be modified to apply, for instance, to the modern, rational, form of society. This is why, in Marx, such expressions as "wage slavery," which he applied to free wage labor, are something more than metaphors. Hegel bequeathed to all later dialecticians the insight that the dynamic forces do *not* destroy every "concept," or everything that is solid and permanent. This insight is often lacking in contemporary sociologists with nominalist persuasions. Yet we cannot think of change without presupposing something which remains the same—which undergoes the change and provides a measure of it. Such a view of history is as far removed from vitalism, which conceives of change

²⁰ Cf. Karl Marx, *Das Kapital* (Tenth edition of Friedrich Engels' version, Hamburg 1922), vol. I, bk. I (*Der Produktionsprozess des Kapitals*), preface to the first edition, p. iv. - Cf. also Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der politischen Ökonomie* (reprinted with corrections from the Moscow edition, Berlin 1953), pp. 7, 10, 364 ff., and also Engels' review: "Rezension Karl Marx, *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*" (in *Das Volk*, London Aug. 6 and 20, 1859; reprinted in the people's edition of *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, Berlin 1951, p. 217 ff.)

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as a steady and continuous flow, as it is from Platonism. What are known today as "existential categories," can be accommodated by this view, though only authority, bondage, suffering, and ever-present catastrophe will deserve this title. Not only Hegel, but Goethe, too, can be put back on his feet: All striving and all stress is, indeed, eternal rest, but the opposite of the kind of rest we find in God, our Lord. When present-day existentialist ontologists claim to close the gap between the static and dynamic by presenting dynamic categories as invariant, and when they seek to justify this by appealing to history, we can hear in their voices, though only garbled and distorted, the distress signals of that which truly is, and which they, as self-appointed authorities on what is, think they can ignore.

Sociology cannot be divided into a static and dynamic branch; nor can the division between the static and dynamic be made to disappear completely. If we look at the dichotomy between invariant and variable forms through positivistic or anti-metaphysical eyes, we are bound to read into the facts the metaphysical doctrine of the primacy of the invariant over the ephemeral. This would be to do injustice to the "facts"—a concept, incidentally, which sociologists since Comte have examined only in a much too superficial manner. But, if we look without preconceptions at the disparity between static and dynamic factors, we can read off something about the prevalent contradictions in society: It grows rigid where it ought to change, because productive relationships resist the change demanded by productive forces; it rushes forward towards its own destruction, because irrational institutions fail to stem the tide of fate or grant a temporary stay of execution. But the categories of the static and dynamic are abstract—not only in Hegel's sense of isolated from one another, or not "mediated" by each other, but also, and simply, because their meanings, which were borrowed from the natural sciences of around 1800, are much too general.

The word "dynamic" is used in a more concrete sense when we speak of the historical trend towards ever-increasing control over external and internal nature as dynamic. This trend takes place in one dimension only, at the expense of possibilities which are not followed up because they do not lead to increased control over nature. Once the dynamic is let loose, it pursues its single

goal single-mindedly and like a maniac, devouring everything foreign to it on its way. By reducing the many to the one—by making everything in nature and society conform to the kind of reason it seeks to enthrone over nature—the dynamic turns into its very opposite: that which always remains the same, the static. As the principle behind this growing identity, the dynamic cannot tolerate the diverse, even if it were to be found in the remotest stellar system, just as little as a totalitarian state can tolerate opposition. In aiming at identity, the dynamic contracts, as it were, to autocracy. If it were to expand instead, it would bring about the gradual rise of diversity, which has been oppressed so far, or possibly liquidated, to a position of equality. The rationalization of working methods would then cease to aim mainly at "productivity," and could instead aim at making work worthier of a human being, at differentiating and satisfying genuine needs, and at conserving nature in its qualitative diversity while it was being exploited for human purposes. But the human species has allowed the dynamic to contract. By aiming only at itself, mankind sank back into nature; in seeking to control it, it conformed to it. This is why mankind does not really qualify as the subject of history; there is really no such subject, only the traces of its blood. But there is a possibility of change: Its germ lies in the development of the productive forces, which will make human labor superfluous up to a point. The decrease in the quantity of work, which could theoretically be at a minimum even today, prepares the way for a new quality to come into society. There is no longer any need for one-dimensional progress; but there is the danger that our present productive relationships will resist the change demanded by our productive forces, and induce the entire system to continue stubbornly in its present course. Full employment becomes an ideal even though work need no longer be the measure of everything.

The static, on the other hand, has so far always appeared as a negative quantity—as an obstacle to a one-sided increase in production. What claimed to be inviolable for no better reason than that it had come to be thus and not otherwise, has always helped to perpetuate misery, and what gave rise to misery: exploitation. Whenever that which had blindly come to be, that is, the static, was no longer able to restrain mankind, it made its

"Static" and "Dynamic"

negative contribution to political progress. Frequently enough, the conservative powers and their supporters—apparently the static elements in society—adopted the profitable principle of industrial progress. This happened, for example, during the decline of the bourgeoisie and in underdeveloped, and hence "static," countries which entered a phase of sudden development. As long as misery continues, the static will continue to provide the energy for change, and to be potentially dynamic. We would easily imagine a change in the nature of the static: General contentment would leave things as they were. This is no more difficult than to conceive a change in the nature of the dynamic. Nietzsche, who was the dynamic thinker *par excellence*, came close to reconciling the two when he professed his belief in violence without rationalizing it, though his only conscious purpose may have been to sing the praises of violence. He was also dimly aware of the other form of the static: "For all desire wants eternity." This form, however, cannot be realized until mankind alters its relationship to nature, in ways of which great works of art can sometimes give us a momentary glimpse.

A sociologist cannot adopt the point of view of an impartial observer. History does not allow him to, and truth and falsehood would present to him the same appearance. If he is allowed to venture a prediction from his partial point of view, then it is at least improbable that society will freeze into immobility. History will not come to rest, as long as there will be antagonism in the social order, and as long as men are not "subjects" of society, but remain its agents—whose low status is sometimes disguised by speaking of their "role" instead. Extreme oppression might perhaps force all unreconciled interests into silence; but it could not permanently release the pent-up tension. The modern oppressors themselves, in every camp, do not let these interests come to rest; they cannot and, indeed, must not do so if they wish to remain in power. The chances of total destruction are greater than the chances of stagnation on the Ancient Egyptian scale. But there is something unhistorical in the dynamic force which moves in aimless circles. Spengler's recurrent cycles made this clear, though this should not be counted as one of the merits of his philosophy of history. By identifying himself with the irrational in history, Spengler quite naturally discovered the essence of the

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irrational in the hopeless rhythm of coming to be and passing away—or of eating and being eaten, as he, as a social Darwinist who believed in the survival of the fittest, might have put it. Nothing changes in the incessant recurrence of this rhythm. The historical link between predator and prey is essentially unhistorical. Peace cannot be achieved either in a motionless totalitarian order or in a state of ceaseless motion, but only through a reconciliation of these opposites.

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A BETTER LIFE IN AN AFFLUENT SOCIETY

1. Contemporary society is preoccupied with wealth. There is no need here to distinguish between capitalism and communism. It is a well-known fact that the great declared objective of Soviet economic planning is "to attain and to surpass the American standard of life."

Every country employs statisticians to compute the annual increase in its national wealth. If the increase is substantial, the government prides itself on it; if it is small, the opposition finds in it a grievance capable of rallying public opinion behind it. In democratic countries, the political organizations that are most firmly entrenched are the ones that seek to advance the pretensions of one group for a larger share of the national wealth, and those that seek to defend the present share of a group against such pretensions. Public affairs consist to a large extent of pleadings

Translated by H. Kaal.

and pressures concerning the division of wealth, and to some extent of more technical discussions concerning its increase.

The United States, which is at present the wealthiest country, provides the ideal which all other countries seek to attain. It is therefore natural to arrange other countries on a scale according to the distance that separates the average wealth of their inhabitants from the average wealth of an American. The most forceful argument which is produced nowadays in favor of collectivism is that economic planning is the most rapid method for advancing on that scale.

2. All this is familiar enough—so much so that we must gain distance if we are to find it surprising and thus, make it a subject for philosophical reflection. This is easily done. Whether we look at the philosophers of ancient Greece, or at the prophets and priests of Israel, or at the authors of ancient Rome, we find that every one of them condemns the individual's passion for wealth and warns us of the corruption that results from a general state of prosperity. There are great differences in tone between them: Some would have man renounce worldly possessions altogether, and live in as great a state of poverty as is compatible with bare survival; but these constitute only a minority. The majority approve of modest comfort, but recommend that man confine his desires to that. Both these attitudes can be found in Christian morality: To the few it offers the vow of poverty; to the many it preaches the moderation of desires.

There is no better witness to the fact that the desire for wealth has always existed, and always been indulged in to some extent, than the fact that it has always been denounced. The desire for wealth is natural, and at times it has been indulged in by the very people who denounced it. Thus Seneca the Elder wrote his epistles condemning luxury in surroundings of great personal luxury.

What is new is not that men desire wealth, but that the satisfaction of their desire has become the major aim of government, and the dominant concern of intellectuals. For a long time, the role of government was thought to be to oppose the concentration of wealth and to preserve among the people an austere morality, while the proper concern of intellectuals was thought

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to be with goods other than temporal ones. What is new is that wealth has suddenly become respectable.

The attitude of governments has certainly changed from complacency about the prosperity of some to concern with the prosperity of all. This change should not be attributed to socialist ideas; for the principles of socialism did not aim at collective prosperity. What they aimed at was the creation of a society free from internal strife—of a true community. The current of thought and sentiment that may be called "socialism" was diverted by another powerful current: the idea that prosperity as such was a good thing. It is in this way that contemporary socialism, in the form it assumed in Soviet Russia, has become more "chrematistic" than "communal."

The word "chrematistic," which was used just now, was, I believe, coined by Sismondi. It designates the science of wealth, which has become, in some measure, the master science of contemporary society.

3. The appearance of Rousseau's *Discours sur les Sciences et les Arts* was a great event in the history of social thought. The scandal created by his thesis shows what the attitudes of his contemporaries were. In this great exercise in rhetoric, which was his first work, Rousseau may not have aimed his guns properly. But his contemporaries were never in doubt as to what the core of his thesis was, namely, that the gradual change of needs, away from their natural state, was an evil. Hence, in opposition to the mass of classical and Christian literature, public opinion in Rousseau's time was already unshakeably convinced that such a change of needs was a good thing.

Rousseau's reply to his numerous opponents was in substance: "But I only repeated what all the classical authors said." And their replies to this may be summarized thus: "That may be so; but nowadays we believe the contrary."

The contrary had already been believed for a long time. Around 1620, there appeared a typical pamphlet entitled *La Chasse au viel gognart de l'Antiquité*. The unknown author¹

¹ This piece was published by Danjou and Cimber in their *Archives curieuses de l'histoire de France*, Second series, vol. 2, pp. 361-387.

contrasts in vivid terms the standard of life of his contemporaries with that of his ancestors. His narrative contains details which make the pamphlet a valuable document for the historian of the period. But it is not as such a document that it is of interest here, but rather as an indication that advances in standards of living were, as early as 1620, a fascinating topic.

To examine how this theme gained gradually in respectability, would be a task for the historian of ideas. For our purposes, it is sufficient to note that the theme of rising standards of living has not always had the place it occupies now, and that the wealth of nations has not always been regarded as the principal concern of governments and of intellectuals.

4. The rise of this theme to respectability had to await the discovery that a gain in wealth is not necessarily made at the expense of others. There is a motif which runs through all classical condemnations of wealth, and which is so invariable and insistent that it cannot be overlooked: Desire without moderation is bad because a man who always satisfies his needs becomes their slave. But there is another motif which underlies and reinforces the first: In becoming the slave of his desires, a man seeks more and more power to satisfy them, and he finds this power in the employment of other men in the service of his own desires. Thus, in being enslaved by his needs, he tries to enslave other men.

Here we have an idea which has played a long and effective part in history, and which for this reason alone deserves our attention. It should be remembered first, that all ancient civilizations, as well as our own up to a certain period, have rested either on slavery or on one of the several forms of serfdom. Under the system of slavery, the master has complete control over the labor of his slaves, and the right to divide the fruits of their labor very unevenly between the gratification of his own needs and their subsistence. Under the system of serfdom, the feudal lord does not have complete control over the labor of his serfs; but they owe him part of the fruits of their labor, or part of their time, or both. Under either system, wealth is measured by the number of slaves one owns, or of serfs one controls. And under either system, it is true that wealth is acquired at the expense of others, or by the exploitation of man by man. Paradoxically enough, this idea

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was given its most effective formulation at a time when society had reached a stage in the process of transformation where the idea ceased to apply.

For hundreds or even thousands of years, the only source of wealth had been the exploitation of other men's labor. It seemed obvious that, even under the most favorable material and moral conditions, a family that had to rely on itself could only achieve a modest degree of comfort. Happy, if it knew how to content itself with the "fruits" of its labor—which is the original meaning of "frugality." The number of its arms (taking into account a certain coefficient of strength) determined the maximum extent of the land it could cultivate. To go beyond that, it would have needed slaves. It could, of course, be reduced to much less than the extent it was capable of cultivating, by having its land seized by the rich; whereas the rich, who engaged in such seizure, could only put their vast holdings to use by means of a large population of slaves or serfs. There was, therefore, what might be called an "upper limit" to the wealth of a free family without slaves; and such a family was always in danger of falling much below this level because its land was always in danger of being seized by the rich. On the other hand, the rich saw no limit to their wealth, provided there were enough slaves or serfs to do for them the necessary manual labor. Wealth was therefore based on seizure and exploitation. And it is quite natural that the desire for wealth should have been condemned, since it could only be satisfied by such means.

The wealth of nations was no less predatory in character than the wealth of individuals. Athens at the height of its achievement was not only a slave-owner's state; it also exacted heavy tributes from the numerous cities that formed part of its alliance. How much larger in scale, and how much more deplorable, was the case of Rome! If Rome passed from its original simplicity to great luxury, this was due entirely to its armies, which brought back spoils and assured tributes from all the shores of the Mediterranean. St. Augustine was not exaggerating when he said that the history of Rome was that of a band of robbers; and it is very appropriate that Brutus should be remembered as one of its heroes; for he seized property and practiced usury with such ruthlessness that he aroused the indignation of Cicero who was,

nevertheless, accustomed to the ways of the financiers of the period. Finally, it might be noted that the wealth of Rome vanished as soon as Constantine chose to spend the tributes from the Mediterranean world in Byzantium.

As long as there is a fairly constant limit to production *per capita*, one man can gain wealth only by making use of another man's labor, and, therefore, some men only can gain wealth at the others' expense. All ancient civilizations rested on the unformulated postulate of a constant productivity of labor.

I would, no doubt, be reproached if I were to omit all mention of commerce as it was practiced for thousands of years. But for the moralists this was only a minor issue. (Plato was exceptionally hostile to it.) It would take too long to explain fully why this was so; a brief sketch will therefore have to suffice. When, during the Middle Ages, Italian merchants dispatched vessels to the Levant, they received, in return for a cargo of European products, a cargo of exotic products whose sale brought them large profits over the cost of the original shipment. But the main result of this exchange of exported European goods for imported exotic ones was to bring variety into the consumption of the rich. Since the capacity of ships was small, it must have seemed to a moralist that the import of exotic goods could only *whet* the appetite for wealth in the importing country, while the only way to *satisfy* this appetite was to bring pressure to bear on others.²

The key to all this is that production *per capita* appeared to be a given constant. It is here, then, that the enormous change that has come over contemporary society is to be located. It would, of course, be wrong to say that technical progress made its ap-

² This is borne out by a passage from Montesquieu concerning Poland: "A few lords own entire provinces; they force the laborers to let them have a greater amount of grain, so they can send it abroad and procure for themselves the goods which their life of luxury demands. If Poland did not trade with any country, her people would be happier. If the great had only their grain, they would give it to their peasants to live on. Too large an estate would be a burden to them, and they would give some of it to their peasants. Since everyone would own herds which yielded hides and wool, there would no longer be enormous sums to pay for clothing. The great would still love luxury; but since they could not find it in their country, would encourage the poor to work." *L'Esprit des lois*, Book XX, ch. XXIII. Montesquieu, incidentally, is not opposed to international commerce under different conditions.

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pearance only recently; no doubt, each generation made some progress over the preceding ones, apart from certain disastrous setbacks. But it was only recently that men became aware of progress and of its acceleration, and that their awareness in turn increased the rate of acceleration.

5. The great new idea is that it is possible to enrich all the members of society, collectively and individually, by gradual progress in the organization of labor, its methods and its implements; that this enrichment provides the means for a greater development of the individual; and that this development can be rapid and unlimited.

This idea is an enormous innovation. It would have greatly surprised the ancient reformers, who were all intent on improving the material lot of the masses and the morals of society. Their views, put forward at different times and in different places, bear such a striking similarity to one another that one could paint a single portrait of them all. Such a Galtonian portrait would look like this:

First the land, whose cultivation occupied the great majority of the labor force, should be redistributed in such a way that each family owned the entire extent it was capable of cultivating. Then these rural laborers should be freed, entirely or in part, of the heavy burdens that rested on them to the profit of the privileged classes. The latter would, from then on, no longer be able to enjoy excessive luxury in the cities in which they had tended to gather; and especially, they could no longer maintain a flock of domestic servants, keeping them thus from productive labor in the fields. The artisans who had also gathered in the cities, attracted by a rich clientele, would either return to the country or work for a more prosperous peasantry, when they saw the sources of their present income dry up. Since peasant families would live in modest comfort, their heads could give more time and care to the common interests of the neighborhood, and assemblies of heads of families would form the base of a pyramidal political structure.

There is no need to emphasize how much this bucolic picture differs from the reality of contemporary society. A brief evocation of the picture is enough. But it is worth pointing out that if this

model had been realized, we could not now flaunt the growth statistics we are now used to.

6. We do not find these statistics surprising enough. The reason is, no doubt, that they are only cited for short periods, and this leads one to say things of which one does not feel the weight. A few years ago, a president of the French Council put forward, as a goal that could be attained, the doubling of the French standard of life in ten years. He surely cannot have calculated that if this rate of growth were to keep up for one hundred years, at the end of this long¹ period, wealth *per capita*³ would have increased 867 times.

There is no need to appeal to imaginary objectives. The same point can be made by citing goals that were in fact attained. In France, production *per capita* increased, according to the most accurate figures, by 3.5 percent *per annum* in the years 1949 to 1959. This figure is not very impressive. But if this rate were to keep up for one hundred years, wealth *per capita* would have increased 31 times.

The rates that can be noted nowadays are a great novelty. The United States has become the wonder of the world by the progress in its standards of life. But according to a noted statistician,⁴ production *per capita* increased no more than seven times in the 120 years between 1839 and 1959, at the mean annual rate of 1.64 percent—a rate with which no advanced country would be content today.

Yet this rate, which appears so small nowadays, was enough to turn America's gain in wealth⁵ into something like the fairy

³ By "standard of life" is here meant "production *per capita*." The product is, of course, calculated at fixed prices.

⁴ Raymond W. Goldsmith; the paper referred to was presented, on April 7, 1959, to the Joint Economic Committee of the United States Congress, and published in its *Hearings on Employment, Growth and Price Levels*. The figures used here occur on page 271.

⁵ It should be noted that the annual growth in production was much greater than here indicated, *viz.* 3.66 percent, but also that the annual growth in population was 1.97 percent. It is *per capita* that production increased by 1.64

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tale of modern times. This shows that this rate, which appears small at present, was relatively great in the past.

It is very difficult to form an accurate picture of changes in standards of life before the nineteenth century. But if one considers this question, the impression one gains is that technical progress was slow enough for its beneficial effects to be completely offset by population increases. This is what seems to have happened in Europe in the sixteenth century;⁶ and it is, no doubt, what happened in India and China during the last three centuries.⁷

However this may be, the facts until very recent times were never striking enough to support the view, which has now become dogma, that a gain in wealth is possible for each and all, continually and at a rapid rate. This rate has even taken on an explosive character. The term "explosive" is not too strong for it. If we try to imagine some of the successive results of a rate which is supposed to keep up (e.g. 3.5 percent *per annum*), we find that we can easily enough imagine our standard of life doubled in twenty years; but its multiplication by 31 in one hundred years exceeds the imagination, and its multiplication by 961 in two hundred years no longer brings anything whatsoever to mind. We shall return to this inconceivability and to what it implies. But at the moment we should be troubled by another thought: If it is true that we are gaining wealth at such a rate, then surely we must give priority to the question of how to employ this wealth. The art of making use of human labor and of natural resources so as to produce a rapidly increasing flow of wealth, has been greatly developed. This calls for another art, that of making use of this wealth.

percent; and it is increase *per capita* that constitutes a measure of progress in standards of life.

⁶ Cf. four articles by E. H. Phelps-Brown and Sheil Hopkins in *Economica*, August 1955, November 1956, November 1957 and February 1959.

⁷ According to Abbot Payson Usher, the population of China fluctuated, since the beginning of the Christian era, between a minimum of 54 and a maximum of 79 million; only in the seventeenth century did it begin the gradual growth that brought it up to 600 million. India around 1522 had perhaps up to 100 million inhabitants, which is far less than the nearly 500 million that now inhabit the peninsula. Cf. Usher, "The History of Population and Settlement in Eurasia," *Geographical Review*, January 1930.

7. If one were to write a history of questions that have been debated, one would see how at different times different questions came alive or died. One would like to think that a question which, at a given time, is so much alive that it attracts all the thought of the moment, is the most important question for the society of the time; and that a question which is neglected is so because of its lack of real value. But it is difficult to believe this. Intellectuals resemble Rabelais's Panurge more than one would like to admit, and while many intellects combine to make a well-known problem with rapidly decreasing yields their quarry, another problem which is important for society remains unexplored. Thus the attention given to problems of productivity certainly exceeds the golden mean, while the problem of "the good life" suffers from neglect.

In speaking of productivity, we think, no doubt, of gain in wealth as its end. But gain in wealth has in turn its end, and this is the good life. There is no need here, I believe, to discuss the extreme view, that a gain in wealth is indifferent to the good life. This doctrine is respectable enough when taught by saints who live according to it; but it is scandalous when taught by men who enjoy most of the comforts of life. I here take it to be certain that a gain in wealth contributes to the good life. But should one, for all that, subscribe to the view which is at the opposite extreme, that a gain in wealth is identical with a better life, so that the only sense we could attach to the idea of a better life would be that of being richer? If this doctrine were true, two men who were equally wealthy would, by definition, live equally well. But suppose one of us were asked to observe two or more wealthy men with equal incomes, and to say afterwards which of them led the best life. None of us would reply that the question was devoid of sense, when thus asked, in practice, to pass a value judgement, and none of us would hesitate to make distinctions. Since we are naturally inclined to take into account a man's generosity to his fellows, I will restrict the question by supposing that the degree of generosity is the same for all the men we observe, and that we only have to take into account the use each man makes of his wealth to better the life of his family. Again, we would not hesitate to say that the use which one man made was superior to the use made by

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another, or that means which were equally large were used to create lives which were not equally good. This brief psychological experiment shows that the problem of "deriving the best possible life from a given increase in wealth" is by no means a false problem. It can even be said that this problem can be posed in the same terms as the problem of productivity. In the case of the latter, we can ask: "Given a certain increase in the factors available for production, how can this increase be made to yield the greatest possible increase in production?" In the case of our problem, we can ask: "Given a certain increase in the products available for human life, how can this increase be made to yield the greatest possible improvement in human life?" What is output for the problem of productivity, is input for the problem of the good life.

We are not dealing, as has been shown, with a false problem. But we are dealing with a problem of extreme difficulty, as will be seen.

8. At first sight, the problem appears to be quite simple. For we are tempted to treat the case of increasing wealth for all families in a progressive society, by assimilating it to the case of increasing wealth for a single family in a static society. Given a family *A* whose income is 100 at the present time; we tell them that their income (real purchasing power) will be 200 in twenty years, 300 in 32 years, 400 in 40 years, 500 in 47 years, and 600 in 52 years.⁸ It is then quite natural to suppose that this family can, in 47 years, live in the way a family does at the present time whose income is five times as high. There are at present a great many different ways of life among families whose income is five times the income of family *A*. We can call the attention of family *A* to what seems to us to be the best way of life in "the fivefold class." But we can do more: The families in the fivefold class occupy social positions which are superior to that of family *A*, and they have duties attached, either by necessity or by vanity, to their superior position. Hence our hypothesis is that family *A* will increase its income five times without any corresponding rise

⁸ These calculations are based on the rate of progress of 3.5 percent *per annum*, which was mentioned above.

in the social structure. There is, therefore, no good reason why this family should assume the duties which rest at present on the families in the fivefold class. Thus, family *A* may not only live as well as does at present the wisest of the families in the fivefold class; it may live much better, if it does not assume the duties of that class.

This way of looking at things is the one that naturally comes to mind when we start thinking about the problem of increasing wealth. But does this picture not mislead us? If it does not, then it must be said that the wealth acquired by an overall increase during the last two hundred years has been very badly used. Suppose we conjure up the spirits of the Marquis de Mirabeau, de Quesnay and de Turgot, and we announce to this tribunal that the wealth *per* Frenchman has, in two centuries, increased sevenfold (an arbitrary figure). If they knew only this figure which, incidentally, would seem improbably high to them, they would suppose that life in 1960 had an ease, a sweetness and a charm about it which are neither noted by present-day observers nor felt by the interested parties. If we could press the spirits to add details to their supposition, their descriptions would make us feel ashamed of the use to which we have put our increased wealth. Hence, if I am correct in thinking that value judgements can be passed on the use of increased wealth (and this is the inspiration of this paper), it must be admitted that the problem cannot be treated as it has just been sketched. It cannot be supposed that wealth as we measured it had increased as we calculated it, if quite different choices determined its use. The progress in standards of life for families in general cannot be conceived, as we did just now, in a *vertical* fashion—as if each family came to have at a given moment the same resources as a family with greater wealth at a preceding moment. Rather, this progress must be conceived as *oblique*—so that an income of 500 in the year 47 is still five times an income of 100 in the year zero, but is nevertheless not the same thing as an income of 500 in the year zero. Finally and above all, the use of increased wealth cannot be discussed in abstraction from its conditions.

9. The conditions of increased wealth have been, and are, draconic. First and foremost among these conditions must be placed the

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mobility of labor, in several senses of the phrase: A man must be ready to change his way of working, his occupation and his place of residence; he must be ready to do otherwise, to do other things and to live elsewhere.

He must be ready to do otherwise; for if he were always to proceed in the same way, he would always produce the same amount in the same time and thus fail to do his share to increase the flow of commodities. He must be ready to change his occupation; for an increase in the total flow of commodities is not, and cannot be, achieved by simply multiplying by a certain constant each of the specific currents of which the total flow is composed at a given moment. He must be ready to move elsewhere; for increased production demands continual changes in the way the labor force is divided.

Metal production obviously would not be what it is if it were still carried on by tiny work crews, around furnaces in which the minerals were melted over a charcoal fire, fanned by the wind or a pair of bellows; and metal work obviously would not be what it is if it were still in the hands of village smiths. There is no need to expand on what everybody knows. But it should be emphasized that a society, in the course of increasing its wealth, constantly calls the individual from the place where he happens to be to a place where he will contribute more to production. This is indeed an imperative of productivity, and it might even be called its essential imperative.

This imperative calls for a reversal of all social values: That a man should have roots in one part of the world; that he should be attached to it because this is where the tombs of his ancestors are, the memories of his childhood and youth, the ties of blood and friendship, and in short, his loves and his duties; this has always been judged to be good, at all times and by all men. But it has now become an evil because it conflicts with the demands of productivity. The man who was firmly rooted in his soil and tied by blood and friendship to his neighbors was always the paradigm of a good citizen. He has now become a recalcitrant producer.

Stability used to be so highly regarded that at one time the main argument in favor of emigration was that it helped to rid

the country of unruly elements, and thus to preserve general stability.

Since the peasantry is stable *par excellence*, it was traditionally regarded as the very backbone of a nation. The Latin authors were unanimous in attributing the decay of morals to the decline of the free peasantry, and to the migration to the cities of country people who had given up agriculture, discouraged by robbery, debts and the import of foreign grain. Nowadays the migration of the peasantry to the cities is regarded as the very condition of economic progress. In England, this migration took place in the first half of the nineteenth century, and it is this migration which Soviet economic planners are seeking to speed up. The countries that have emerged in turn as the forerunners of the new society, namely, England and the United States, pride themselves on having only a very small and gradually decreasing part of their population engaged in farming. And French economists deplore the fact that our fields still retain a much too large proportion of our working population.

Whereas the free peasantry used to be regarded as the healthiest part of a nation, it is now looked upon as its backward element. As late as the eighteenth century, the prime concern of social reformers was to guarantee and to extend the possessions of the peasantry,⁹ and to free the peasants of obligations that oppressed them.¹⁰ Nowadays the main concern of reformers is to diminish the number of peasant families.

But peasants are not the only people who are attached to the place in which they live. In the British as well as in the French press, one reads from time to time of the outcries raised

⁹ This goal was persistently pursued in France during the eighteenth century. It inspired the ordinance of Chancellor d'Aguesseau against the extension of the rights of mortmain. It also inspired the decrees of the Revolution that abolished these rights altogether—though by decreeing that a peasant's holdings were to be divided equally among his heirs, the revolutionaries violated all the principles of economics and did great damage to the progress of agriculture and the welfare of the population.

¹⁰ This is illustrated by the abolition of all feudal rights during the French Revolution.

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by miners or industrial workers against the management's decision to close their mine or plant. It may seem to be enough to guarantee these workers reemployment in a different location. But this is to count for nothing the attachment men feel for the place in which they live. This attachment is all the more striking when the place offers to the outside observer no visible attractions whatsoever.

If men become attached to the place in which they live, they also become attached to their occupation and to a certain way of practicing it. The attachment to methods was evident in the case of the artisan: His great pride was the method taught him by a master. But his traditional method had to give way to newer and more productive methods, which are, moreover, constantly changing. Even in the United States, in industries as far removed as possible from the practices of the artisan, the workers show great defiance when any changes in work rules are proposed that would alter the composition of their crews.¹¹

The mobility of labor, the *sine qua non* of productivity, is to my mind a topic of immense importance. But I cannot develop it further here. Let me, therefore, just emphasize that the growth of roots, or the attachment to, and love of, a place, an occupation and a method, which were once taken for attitudes that were good for society, are nowadays taken for attitudes that are bad for the economy; and that the virtues of stability and faithfulness to the past are now considered vices. The individual in a productive society must be a docile nomad, ready to go wherever the goal of the greatest possible productivity directs him. One might note here a moral paradox: For what is demanded of the resident of the City of Productivity is, in short, a certain capacity for detachment from temporal bonds, which is also required of the mystic. However, the former is rewarded for his detachment, not by an abundance of spiritual goods, but by a profusion of temporal ones.

10. In a society of men who are essentially displaceable, the notion of "morals" has no longer the sense it had for the classical authors, and it could no longer have it. The ancients thought of

¹¹ This theme played a major part in the American steel dispute of 1959.

good morals as consisting essentially of faithfulness to the best examples set by one's ancestors. If I want to picture to myself good morals as they were formerly conceived, I think of a certain artisan of my acquaintance who, in the same place, practices with love and minute care the art his family had practiced for several generations; he cannot be tempted by novel products, and his great passion is to collect beautiful specimens of his art. Under the old system, such a man would be a model to his neighbors; but in reality, he is considered by them something of a character and treated almost as a stranger. Far from being influential in his neighborhood by reason of his virtue, he is never listened to because of his different point of view; and when he speaks out against the broadening of the street in order to preserve its charm, it is said (and this is true) that he does not own a car.

In a productive society, the individual must not only, in his role as producer, learn to look for the employment in which he can make the greatest contribution to the total product; he must also, in his role as consumer, learn to buy the commodities that are offered to him at decreasing costs. It is misleading to measure an increase in wealth by first taking the typical or the average income of an individual or a family, by then noting how much this income has increased in terms of current monetary units, and by finally dividing this increase by a cost-of-living index in order to arrive, by such a division, at a so-called "real" increase. For this is hardly the effective increase, except for the rare or even non-existent individual whose expenditures have in fact remained distributed in the way in which the items in the index are distributed. Following Jean Fourastié, we can obtain a much more significant measure, by taking the typical or the average income, expressed in terms of current monetary units, as our point of reference, and by dividing the price of each item by this nominal income. Increase in wealth will then no longer appear as a single "real" increase in income, but in the form of a multitude of real reductions in price, each different from each. The divergence between these real reductions is enormous. Thus, in less than fifty years, the price of electricity for household purposes, expressed in terms of a worker's salary, has fallen to four percent of what it was, and the price of a bed with a metal frame to 25 percent, while the price of crystal glasses has, on the contrary,

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risen by 50 percent.¹² It is then clear that, of two families whose incomes have grown in the same way, the one that looked for its consumption to articles whose real prices were decreasing, derived from this a feeling of increased wealth which was much more pronounced than that of the other family, which looked for its consumption to articles whose real prices decreased but little, or remained the same, or even increased.

This brings us back to the point that increase in wealth is not vertical but oblique. If a workingman's family had, in 1760, conceived the ambition of living in the way a certain family, ten times richer, lived at the time, and if it had remained obsessed with this ambition, it could not realize it when the statistician told the family that its wealth had now multiplied by ten. It could not build the same house, and obviously could not have the same servants.¹³ Our family cannot enjoy the luxury or even the comfort of yesterday; but it can enjoy the abundance of today: a profusion of light and a rapidity of locomotion which a comfortable or wealthy family could not obtain formerly. Our family will congratulate itself on the improvement of its lot to the exact extent that its tastes run to what has become easy to obtain; and it will deny this improvement to the extent that its tastes remain with what is *not* easier to obtain. In other words, that family improves its fortune most which is the most *opportunistic* in its tastes. And if there was, in general, no opportunism of tastes in our society, there could be no progress; for the products which could be offered at rapidly decreasing real prices could not find a market that expanded rapidly enough. Without opportunism, tastes would change too slowly, and the demand would cling to products whose costs were constant or on the increase. To meditate on this is to understand one of the conditions of economic progress.

¹² *Documents pour l'histoire des prix* by Jean Fourastié and Claude Fontaine; the period covered is 1910-1955.

¹³ The question of servants shows better than any other that a general increase in wealth cannot place the poorer families in the position previously occupied by the wealthy families. In fact, the rich have always had servants; hence, it is obviously impossible for all to have servants. This question also shows that the position of the richest families cannot but suffer in the course of a general increase in wealth; for this raises the price of men, as compared with the price of objects.

It appears, then, that economic progress rests, in general, on the *opportunism* of the individual. The individual must be an opportunist in production; that is, he must be willing to exchange one role in society for another which is more productive. And he must be an opportunist in consumption; that is, he must direct his desires to objects that can be produced at decreasing cost. The well-being of the individual will then be a function of this double opportunism. And hence, also, the phenomena of irritation, anxiety and disenchantment will appear precisely to the extent that an individual lacks this opportunism.

A man who lacks this double opportunism not only fails to further the general progress; he positively hinders it. By refusing to change his place for more productive employment, he lowers the average productivity. By refusing to buy new products that may decrease in cost, he restricts their market and impairs their chances of actually decreasing in cost. He does not, therefore, only stand apart from the movement of the economy; he attracts the hostility of other men. Hostility to a man who fails to keep up with his time is a vague sentiment, but as we have just seen, may have a rationale behind it. The more importance one attaches to the speed of economic progress, the stronger this sentiment tends to become. A man who lacks the required opportunism finds, then, that he is subject to the pressures, not only of the circumstances, but of public opinion as well, and this may lead him to behave *as if* he were endowed with this opportunism. And his behavior "as if" may in turn result in inner tensions. Psychoanalysts seek the origin of such tensions much too often in infantile experiences when they may quite simply lie in present pressures.¹⁴

11. We have thus arrived at social questions, after taking the indirect route which leads through the domain of economics. In *Emile*, Rousseau contrasts two models of the good life. On one model, a citizen subordinates all his interests to those of the community, and loves only his country. But this, according to Rousseau, is only possible in a small rustic society with very stable morals. It has always struck me as odd that so many students

¹⁴ One might also find in these pressures the origin of the remarkable role which the nightmare has played in contemporary literature.

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of Rousseau, beginning with Robespierre, should have tried to create his community of citizens under social conditions which, as Rousseau had expressly said, were incompatible with it. Because Rousseau looked upon the society of his time as already too large, too complex and too advanced for such a community of citizens, he proposed, in *Emile*, a completely different model: that of a retired life, untouched by social currents. But a productive society could not exist if everyone followed the advice given to *Emile*. Such a society could not even tolerate it if a minority followed this advice. Besides, when Rousseau made an effort, in the second part of his life, to follow his own advice, he constantly complained that his retreat was not respected; and this was almost two centuries ago.

The individual in a productive society can in no way be detached. He finds himself engaged in numerous social relationships which undergo constant change and exercise constant pressure. All of the traits of a productive society are to be found in the United States, probably because that country was settled by men who had cut all their ties in order to come there, and who, therefore, offered the least resistance to the mobility and the opportunism that we have found to be essential to a productive society. The new situation in which man finds himself has also been examined most carefully in the United States. It was recognized there that the well-being of the individual, in his social relationships, was a matter of "adjustment."

Since the process of increasing wealth demands that the individual change his place, his neighbors and his practice, it is important that he accommodate himself easily and quickly to his new condition. Since he is displaceable in these various ways, he must also, if he is not to suffer from his displacement, be psychologically displaceable. That is to say, he must feel no more than a passing regret for lost contacts, and he must take vivid pleasure in making new ones—but only because these contacts are new, and not because they are of a certain kind; for these contacts, too, are destined to be broken by a new displacement. And since the wages of displacement are a growing variety of goods offered to him, he must adapt his tastes to what is thus put within his reach.

These are not, as is sometimes said, the characteristics of the American way of life, but those of a productive society in general.

Nothing appears to me more ridiculous than the criticisms addressed to the American way of life by leftist intellectuals who, at the same time, celebrate the gains of Soviet production. It is clear that these latter gains, which are incontestable and striking, have implied, and still do, the same process of displacement, the same duty of mobility and the same tendency to opportunism which we have noted. And all this takes place on a much larger scale because of the greater speed of the movement, and because this movement is, in Russia, directed by a strong central government.

12. The only "leftists" who are in a position to find fault with the characteristics of the American way of life, are those who are steeped in the traditions of the peasant and the artisan. For a very long time now, there has been a "leftist" movement which is not "chromatistic," which is in revolt against all use of power, and which conceives of an ideal society in something like the following way: Men are not subjected to constraint; they are not spurred on by vanity or by the desire for more wealth; each relationship between them rests on common bonds, which assure that they are naturally drawn together. The soil, the tombs of the ancestors, faith, memories, intermarriage; all these combine to create a natural community which, in turn, inspires individual conduct. It follows from the very nature of the social setting that any tasks, required in the interest of the community, will be carried out voluntarily and in common; and that any decisions affecting the whole will be taken together. For a long time it was thought that this had been the state of nature, and that the power of one man over another, and the exploitation of man by man, were the result of artificial institutions; once these were destroyed, society would return to its former arcadian state.

No one nowadays thinks of reestablishing the arcadian state everywhere. Rousseau already pronounced this to be impossible. Nor does anyone think of making it flourish where the conditions for it may all be thought to be present—which is what Rousseau wanted to do on the island of Corsica. Take, for example, certain regions in Africa, which are free from the pressures of an exploding population and where social intercourse is still centered around each village community. No one would dream of suggesting that progress consisted in ridding these regions of every-

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thing that was opposed to an arcadian state; rather, progress is taken to consist in developing these regions on the model of our productive society. Thus the arcadian ideal is quite dead as far as its positive implications go; but its negative implications linger on. We want a productive society, and yet deplore the features it necessarily has. These appear especially black when compared with the arcadian dream which continues to haunt us.

13. Here lies the conflict which we must try to resolve. Contemporary society is built with the end of greater efficiency of production in view, and on the principle of an ever-increasing flow of goods and services. This principle implies, on the one hand, that the individual as a producer must be mobile, ready to change his place for more productive employment elsewhere; and, on the other hand, that those appetites must be aroused that are the easiest to satisfy. In this society, the material and moral well-being of the individual is a function of his opportunism.

It should be noted that in such a society advertising is by no means the parasite it is thought to be. In view of the fact that there are facilities for producing certain things and not others, the guidance of the consumers' tastes to things that are easy to produce at decreasing costs, forms an integral part of the whole mechanism. Advertising of products, though not of brands, would survive even if the economy were to be socialized. It is in this form that advertising can be seen to emerge in Soviet Russia.

It certainly cannot be denied that the individual in such a society finds himself subject to the pull of the general current. And one may, if one likes, call this "alienation." It can, however, be said that the obligation "to keep up with one's time" under which the individual finds himself, does not differ radically from the obligation to remain in one's place under which he would be in a primitive society. It is difficult to see why conformity to change should be harder to bear than conformity to the *status quo*. Of course, to be uprooted time and again, hurts whatever there is of the habitual within us; but it is equally certain that, in a static society, to encounter great obstacles to change, must hurt whatever there is of the restless within us. The "good conscience" one has in a static society, after one has made one's contribution to the maintenance of good morals, has its analogue in a dynamic

society: in the satisfaction we feel after having done our share to gratify the needs of others.

14. Of course, all these needs are not of equal value. Here our task becomes more precise. An individual in a productive society receives from society a certain amount of credit; and the more efficient he is in helping others to obtain what they desire, the greater the amount he receives. As long as he is busy increasing his credit, the value of what others desire is indifferent to him. This indifference gives to the "motive of profit" its amoral character. It would be wrong to think that only a capitalist acted from this motive. The individual in a productive society who changes one job for another that is better paid, without caring about the quality of the desires he serves, also acts from this motive. In fact, this motive is the general law which governs the "placement" of men in any such society. Now the individual in such a society is not only indifferent to the value of what others desire; it is even in his interest to arouse and maintain those desires in others that can be satisfied with the least effort on his part.

It follows from this that, in a productive society, the individual has no incentive to guide the desires of others towards worthier objects, but instead a strong incentive to guide them toward objects that are easier to produce. He must therefore take an interest in the satisfaction (and in the excitation) of the desires of others, but show no interest in their quality. If these desires appear to him badly guided, his attitude in this respect may be described, in flattering terms, as tolerance, but could be described, in more accurate terms, as interested complacency. Nevertheless, since he must live with others, he is affected by the kind of life they come to lead, as a result of such gradual changes in their desires. If he has sold intoxicating beverages, he must put up with the inconvenience of living among intoxicated people.

We thus arrive at the following simple truth: Although an individual has an immediate interest in serving the desires of another, irrespective of their quality, he has, of necessity and in the long run, an interest in the quality of the kind of life his contemporaries lead.

We can imagine the producer being pushed by an "invisible

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hand" to the place where he can best serve the preferences shown by the consumer. But we do not feel that there is an "invisible hand" which arranges the products around the consumer, so as to bring them into harmony and to display a style of life which will bring out all of the consumer's potentialities as a human being. For a generation now, efforts have been made to improve on the workings of the "invisible hand" which were formerly left to themselves—efforts, that is, to bring to perfection the mechanism of production. This mechanism now issues a flow of commodities of ever-increasing abundance and variety. But what an average family selects from this flow is ill assorted, fails to serve its purpose, and looks like a collection of odds and ends. We feel uncomfortable in front of a shelf of books whose principle of selection was the award of a literary prize. The same lack of style characterizes our contemporary way of life.

15. The Latin word *amoenitas* designates the pleasurable features or the charm of a perspective. Neither a wild place nor a functional building can be called "amene," only a place which is delightfully fit for human habitation. Since this is the proper meaning of the word, it seems to me well chosen to signify the quality which we would do well to bring into the midst of our lives. I am pleased to see that this word figures already in the English legal vocabulary, and that it should have entered into it precisely in connection with the "external costs" of industrialization: "The loss of amenities" means that industrial construction may have taken away some of the pleasant aspects of a place. Conversely, a systematic effort to render a place more agreeable is called, in the United States, "to create the amenities." The word means then, fortunately, what I have in mind, which is the harnessing of our productivity to amenity.

Advanced nations are nowadays very proud of their productive capacity. They will have better reason to be proud of it when this power will be used to make life more agreeable—that is, to develop amenity.

A good indication of our present state is the excessive importance we attach to vacations. We think of these not only as a pause in the current rhythm of our lives, but also as a change of place, away from where we usually are. It is hard not to con-

clude that the great value we attach to this pause and to this change implies a very unfavorable judgement on the nature of our daily rhythm and on the merits of our place of work or residence. A man whose life was more happily arranged would hardly have such a strong desire to escape.

Too much attention has been devoted to the progress of productivity, and is still devoted to it every day. It is time to devote some attention to the progress of amenity.

16. "My concern is to increase the amenity of life." here we have a very imprecise statement. But lack of precision is not lack of sense. It is rather as if the statement contained too much sense. If I were to say "My intention is to increase my knowledge," no one would reply "I do not know what you have in mind." What someone might say to me is "I do not know what kind of knowledge you want to acquire;" for it may be Greek philosophy, the theory of games, nuclear physics, abstract painting, or atonal music. And after I have made it clear what kind of knowledge I am after, my interlocutor may ask whether this kind deserves, more than any other, the expenditure of effort I propose to bestow on it. Similarly, my statement concerning amenity must be made more precise before it can be discussed. And this is what I will now try to do.

Man is a sensitive, working and social being. As a sensitive being he perceives forms, sounds, odors; and his sensitivity is the source of enjoyment and suffering. The lack of this sensitivity is an imperfection, its development a step towards perfection. External conditions that offend this sensitivity, or oppose its development, are an evil, while external conditions that cultivate or delight it are good. And this is part of amenity.

As a working being, man may be harnessed to his task, riveted to his function; he may feel that he is held to his work by an imperious external force or by a cold or malevolent destiny; he may struggle against this necessity which is imposed on him from without, or feel resentment towards it; he may dream of freeing himself from his enslavement to his task. And all that these feelings make him suffer is an evil. On the other hand, it is good, and one of the greatest goods we can enjoy, to be absorbed in, and delighted by, one's task; to look upon interruptions as

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necessary means for doing an even better job; to regard one's task as the best use one could make of one's life. And this, too, is part of amenity.

Finally, as a social animal, man lives necessarily with others. He may encounter indifference and even malice; he may feel that he annoys others, that he is deprived of esteem or affection. And this is a great evil. But he may also find himself in good company; he may encounter good will made more agreeable by pleasant manners. Good company will not only provide him with immediate pleasures; it will also cultivate him and carry him to the degree of social perfection of which he is capable. Happy, if he finds in his circle some who can arouse in him the feelings of love and admiration. And this is also part of amenity.

Thus, the nature of our physical surroundings, its relationship to our work, and to the nature of our social contacts; these are, it seems, the chapters into which a discussion of amenity would be divided.

INTEGRATION OF THE SOCIAL SYSTEM:
AN APPROACH TO THE STUDY
OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

The usual practice in contemporary literature is to treat of economic growth by way of an analysis of the several factors whose joint operation is thought to issue in an expansion of the productive powers of society. There are, for instance, the factors of saving and investment; investment leads to an increase in the social product and, if sufficiently large, to a rise in per capita income. Around this central mechanism of growth, many authors group a variety of contributing factors which perform a more or less decisive role in raising a country from poverty to riches. Those usually discussed include population, entrepreneurship, technology, resources, and a somewhat loosely defined category of social and institutional factors.

No one can deny that all of these are somehow involved in

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the process of economic growth. But are they sufficient to explain it? Or rather, are we justified in talking of economic growth as if it were nothing but the interaction of these factors in determined ways? If that were so, then society, of which economy forms but a part, would be simply a piece of complex machinery in which all the gears run smoothly if only they are of the right size and proportion. Abstractly seen, it may indeed be possible to make some progress towards a knowledge of the way society "works," but a final understanding would be precluded. Economic growth in a particular country is not the result of certain actions, but a process of inter-actions in which cause and effect are intermingled with antecedents that reach immeasurably far into the past and which comes to a head through a conjunction of unique and favorable occurrences. In short, it is an historical process. In this perspective, economic growth appears as the remaking of society.

What is the proper method for the study of a subject of such vast scope? The mechanistic, factorial analysis, we have agreed, yields a not insignificant amount of practical knowledge. From it we may learn that if we press these and these buttons, push these and these levers, certain more or less predictable consequences will follow. The predictions are perhaps not very accurate, but still they may be useful to the people who have to make the plans and the decisions. An historian, on the other hand, would be willing only to describe and interpret the past course of a country's economic evolution, he would shy away from drawing general conclusions and from extending the experience of one country to other countries in similar conditions. Yet a third way seems possible, however, that would at once do justice to the historical nature of the process of economic growth and yet manage to be relevant to a wide arc of possible experiences. This is the approach which concentrates on the morphology of growth.

We know, for instance, that so-called underdeveloped or traditional economies exhibit fundamental similarities quite irrespective of their prevailing, and often sharply diverging, cultural patterns. Liberia, Ecuador, Jordan, and Afghanistan may be widely apart on specific cultural grounds, but as social economies they are sufficiently alike to permit us not only to call them primitive folk societies, as the late Professor Robert Redfield might have done,

though they may be shot through with a pattern of feudal or quasi-feudal relations, but also to entertain definite expectations with regard to their economic performance. On the other hand, we also grasp a fundamental consistency in the character of the so-called advanced economies. Culturally France, for example, and Japan may be at opposite poles. But economically, having in view their capitalistic, urban-industrial structure, they are certainly more alike each other than either is to Jordan, Afghanistan, etc. Thus we may order societies according to the degree of their transition from a primitive folk to an advanced socio-economic order, and also to the extent of the internal cohesiveness and harmonious adjustment of their constituent cultural elements. Each of these societal types will exhibit a style or pattern of living, characteristic of both the stage of development to which it has attained and its tendency towards either cultural arrestment or transition. This style will reveal the distinctive form of the type. Economic development is accompanied by, nay, it is found at one with, an orderly succession of such forms.

It is only for the sake of analytic clarity, however, that we are justified in separating the phenomena of economic growth from the plethora of activities which make up in their complex inter-relationships the woof and warp of a social system undergoing change. The dynamic character of activity in social life suggests to us not only a constant renewal of the traditional cultural patterns—of values, institutions, manners, and of other relevant behaviour—but also their gradual transformation into something else. The persistence of old and the simultaneous emergence of new forms characterizes the continuance, through time, of a social system. The activities which are typical of economic growth—e.g., the expansion of economic institutions or the accumulation of wealth—are bracketed on either side by the forces of and change persistence. These activities are forming no less than they are formed, they stamp their character upon the general social process, but they also are determined by this process. If we should look at the course of social transformation with the eyes of an economist, we should move strictly economic actions into the foreground, though we should lose the necessary perspective if, behind the relief of this foreground, we should not also be able to perceive, and perceive clearly, a background of changing values, customs,

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motives, and structural relationships in social behavior. Or we may study the processes of social change as either historians or sociologists. Though in each instance, the reliefs in the foreground will change, foreground and background together will always represent the self-same landscape.

Transformation suggests the imagery of a trans-forming, a passing over into new configurations. Economic growth may therefore be studied as a process which, following upon the disruption of the old and no longer functional forms, successfully reintegrates around new principles the fragments of the social system which remain. It is important in this connection to recognize the historical specificity of growth phenomena. Economic growth may appear to our eyes as a rhythmic forward movement in time, with occasional periods of accelerated change, followed by periods of arrestation or decline, but each forward wave will appear in a different historical setting and suggest to us a different meaning. Though the phenomenon, as measured objectively through various statistical indices, is evidently everywhere the same, it will remain closed to our understanding unless we succeed in relating it to the specific historical situation in the background against which the concrete event must be viewed. Should we wish this background away through a wave of the magic hand of abstraction, we should be left with but a mass of more or less unintelligible signs. The economic growth of 19th-century England and 20th-century Russia were both eminently historical events. They permit the analyst who follows a mechanistic orientation to draw important parallels, but these will remain analogies at best. Historical, indeed all social, events are time-specific: they yield their hidden meaning only if viewed as part of a total configuration, the rhythmic forwardmoving *Gestalt* of a limited period of social transformation. It is for precisely this reason that purely formal analysis may yield significant insights into the behaviour of social man, insights which will have general validity because they derive from an analysis of stylistic unities. It is suggested that behind the historical differences which marked the emergence of both England and Russia as commanding economic powers, we shall detect fundamental similarities in the processes which have led to the successful struggle for world-wide eminence of these two countries.

The acceleration of growth rates—using whatever statistical

measures are conveniently available—may be rapid or gradual and extend over a time period of varying length. Depending on these circumstance, we may assume that the disruption and transformation of old forms will be more or less radical, more or less severe. But invariably, growth will be associated with this dialectic process and, unless it merges in a new synthesis, will collapse before its course has become reintegrated at a new stage of its development. In this view, then, the integration or, more accurately, the reintegration of the social system is the specific medium in and through which economic growth occurs.

Let us assume that, for one reason or another, the old forms of social organization are no longer adequate, that they are placed under severe stress because of the spread of new knowledge, new technology, new desires, new ambitions. If nothing but the breakdown of the old forms were achieved, economic growth would not take place; instead, we would be left with social chaos. It is therefore evident that a new system of social, political, and economic order must be created which is adequate to the new needs and ambitions and which alone permits the release of new energies and their direction into economically constructive paths.

This simple fact of social dynamics is clearly perceived by the great national leaders of today whose countries are submerged in just such a process of disruption through forces both from outside and within. These leaders are facing up to the immensely difficult task of welding a diversity of limited interests into a national whole. They have to struggle with problems of language, custom, value-orientation, political structure, economic dualism, and the like. By comparison, and we mention this only parenthetically, the problems of savings and capital formation appear to be of relatively minor importance, to belong rather to a sub-category of problems than to the core of the problem itself. For to a considerable extent, the solution of economic problems is dependent upon the simultaneous if not prior solution of the general problem of social integration. Modern developmental planning must therefore function as an instrument of transition and be basically preoccupied with the question of how to move from less to more highly differentiated, from simple to complex, from particularistic to universalistic structures in the life of a nation or a region. It must be preeminently concerned with the morphology of growth.

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Integration in relation to economic growth. We shall assume in the following that a certain amount of social disruption has already occurred in a formerly traditional society where family and community represented the central meaning of human relations, that social as well as political life is astir in the country, that there exists among the population a strong desire for higher levels of material comfort, as well as for wider opportunities in health, education, and leisure. We shall assume all this and argue that economic growth which is necessary in order to give some satisfaction to these particular wants is accompanied by and, to a large extent, achieved through, successive and increasingly higher levels of integration of the social system. Such integration of course must take place around entirely new and different principles than those which formerly prevailed. For at a particular juncture in the evolution of a social group, economic growth will appear as a leap forward into time, as a sudden speed-up of the rate of social transformation. In order for this leap to be successful, it becomes imperative to gather all of a nation's strength and to point it towards the objective, to align the different forces and purposes within an existing social order in such a way as to leave none to hinder the other, as to remove internal obstructions, and find new forms for new functions. For, in the end, the leap cannot succeed unless all of the human energies which lie latent within the social structure are released and turned to such uses as will yield the wished-for results. The principal difficulty in this purposeful concentration of a country's strength will be found in its lack of internal cohesion, its lack of integration. This will be evident on at least three levels: a. social and political structure; b. economic structure; c. structure of spatial relationships.

It is the purpose of the following sections briefly to consider the nature of the problems to be faced on each of these levels.

Social and political integration. If substantial economic growth is to take place, an effective social and political space must be created out of the fundamental disunity which is encountered in traditional societies. To suppose the existence of disunities in such societies may at first appear anomalous, for it is commonly presumed that a country whose social structure is organized primarily around the family and the village commune, will exhibit a remarkable degree

of internal cohesion and stability. This, however, is true for only as long as we focus attention on the village or at best a small region of villages. But when we raise our sight to the level of the nation, itself composed of many different regions, each with its local traditions and very often with even its own speech, we find that this unity and this cohesion often is not present on the larger scene. The very opposite, in fact, may be discovered. For instance, serious conflicts of authority may arise as local is challenged by national leadership. Effective verbal communication may be difficult because of the variety of dialects which will probably do more to divide the country than any other single difference. Or religious questions may breach the country, set Moslem against Hindu and Christian against Moslem. Though each small region may count, under certain conditions, on the uncompromising loyalty of its population, though each village may certainly expect to receive the faithful support of local villagers, such loyalty may be withheld from the nation, the concept of which may not as yet exist as an effective psychological reality.

But the limits to economic expansion in the village are set, in part, by the development of the surrounding region which, in turn, is dependent for its own level of opportunity by what is achieved in the nation as a whole. The social and political integration of the nation is, therefore, essential to the economic growth of the whole. Internal unity, order, and peace must be created through the extension of the powers of a central government and its administration over the entire geographic area; it must be created through a heightened consciousness of national, as opposed to local, tradition, and through a legal framework that not only permits an adequate representation of diverse interests but also defines the rights and duties of the citizens of the State. Subordinate rulers must be tamed; old allegiances must be broken. Above all, a new sense of values and attitudes must be ingrained that will permit a rapid forward movement of the economy and turn the individual away from primary identification with his family and the village commune, so that he may assume a higher sense of responsibility towards society at large.¹ A public moral order must be brought into being.

¹ This is probably more necessary today than during previous historical

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Let us pause for a moment and consider this condition. The old and sanctioned values of the community had been conservative and particularistic: they placed high premium on the traditional ways of solving recurrent problems; they supported an existing hierarchy of local authorities; they encouraged a way of behaviour that as rule gave the older generation an almost absolute authority; and they also demanded that each person assume fundamental economic and social responsibilities towards the family or clan. The new values which must come to replace these, or at least to claim their right to be considered primary, are progressive and universalistic: social standing must be determined by one's achievements in the practical affairs of men rather than by tradition; sons must take over from their fathers and strike out on new paths; the look must be ahead, not backward to one's ancestors; common rules must be equally applied to all; rational calculation must replace time-honored customs and beliefs in coping with situations for which the traditional answers are no longer appropriate.

An interesting change must also occur in the pattern and meaning of responsibilities. Initially, in the as yet undisturbed society, responsibilities are unambiguously defined by tradition. They are comprised in the reciprocal responsibilities towards one's immediate family, the clan, the village. Sharp distinctions may be drawn between the *we-group* and the *"others"*: toward the first one acts responsibly in accordance with custom, towards the second so as to advance one's immediate material interest. The connotation of these reciprocal relations among the *we-group* is strictly a moral one: one speaks of filial piety and duty.

With the transition to modern society, however, these distinctions between in-group and out-group tend to blur, and responsibility becomes increasingly impersonal, secularized, and diffused. Urbanization, which accompanies the movement away from folk-society, brings with it a dangerous loosening of kinship ties. Yet anarchy cannot be tolerated if the social group is to survive, and the evolving economic and social system proves itself to be a very demanding and complex one: the life and livelihood of each

periods when growth was more sporadic, more limited, and due less to technological innovations than to market speculation, monopoly gains in trade, and similar factors.

individual becomes suddenly dependent upon the action of thousands of others who stand in no unique and personal relation to him. Responsibility therefore ceases to be a moral obligation and rather assumes a legalistic and contractual form. Thus, on the job, a certain wage is paid for a contracted quantum of labor: it would be irresponsible for both employer and employee to break this contract. Delivery schedules are determined and quality standards are set: consistent failure to abide by them is judged to be irresponsible conduct, and damages may even be claimed and awarded in court. Society soon learns to protect itself and, acting responsibly through its government in the interest of the whole, demands legislation, for example, to insure maintenance of purity standards in the processing of foods and drugs. Or the net of impersonal, secularized responsibility may be drawn wide with the introduction of social insurance schemes, as for example against unemployment and illness, that substitute effectively for the personal concern of family members.

This shift to a new type of responsibility, to a new standard of value, is most difficult to accomplish in practice, and many setbacks may be suffered along the way. And yet, as we survey the course of western civilization, we shall observe a progressive secularization of values in precisely this sense, a secularization which came to a definite break-through during the last century, when science and machine technology swept away what the new age would tolerate no longer. It would be futile to speculate at this point about the sequence of events that led to this result. All that we can say is that there existed a definite historical interaction which helped to encourage the formation and development of both the new values and the new technology. It would be similarly futile to speculate on the possibility of another, non-western, and less secularized system of values that might some day be brought into harmony with science and industrialism. If the present values—and they have been condemned often enough by perspicacious critics—drive a wedge between man and man, and leave each isolated in the lonely prison of his ego, we yet have to accept these values and, from this point, out of this acceptance, endeavor to fight our way through to a life more in keeping with man's most inner needs. For growth economics is a matter of calculation in terms of a common medium of exchange. And only a system of values which

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not only permits but actively encourages such calculation in every sphere of life can be held, in these days, to be adequate to sustain growth over an extended period.

Now it may be argued that it is precisely this *Entzauberung* of the past, this rationalistic system of values, which may cause an undue schism in the body social, by tending to disrupt more than it would unify. Whereas right and wrong actions could formerly be distinguished with relative ease, now, with the sudden obfuscation of the ancient rules, a radical relativism of moral value will have brought society close to the edge of spiritual chaos. There is certainly some truth in this assertion. But it is also true that emergent society will come to insist on its own standards of conformity, be it through the uncoordinated pressures of mass opinion, or through an ideology which holds out the norms of the collectivity, or the platitudes of the collectivity, as the ultimate good. Thus the threatening relativism of moral values will soon be overshadowed by the somewhat colorless, drab uniformity of the collective will. And this indeed appears to be one of the paradoxes of modern economic growth: though the individual loses a certain measure of his dignity by being lifted out of the moral certainties of his past life, though his very existence as a morally responsible person may be put into question, he may yet gain a new measure of self-confidence by achieving, as a member of a larger collectivity—whether it be the Organization, the Party, or the State—a remarkable degree of mastery over his environment. A great and novel tradition can thus be brought into being, a moral force around which common loyalties may be grouped, providing a new source of strength for decisions and actions and a common universe of reference for all. The way must be opened for Community to pass into Society.

This change will not take place in the absence of a strong and stable government, in the absence of high statesmanship, which succeeds in extending a uniform political, legal, and administrative system of order over the entire nation. The ideological basis of this system matters far less than its ability to establish firm rules by which the political life of the nation may be carried on, and the extent to which these rules are sustained by the active or passive consent of the inhabitants. For where this is achieved, a number of important consequences for economic growth will follow. Re-

sources which previously had been used to maintain internal order by force—in the absence of sanctioned rules—can now be released for peaceful and more constructive uses. A recovered sense of freedom may provide the incentives for new adventures in enterprise. With political stability widely expected, the future is likely to be faced with greater equanimity, allowing more certain expectations to be entertained. And thus the possibility is given for planning, in the private as well as in the public sector. Order in the nation; order in business: this is the old Confucian saying turned around. It is also the principle that applies to modern society. With planning become feasible, these enterprising groups will be encouraged that are willing to assume moderate economic risks in place of excessive, speculative ones. By further permitting, with the establishment of internal order, a large measure of free movement of workers and capital within the effective political and social space, new opportunities will be created for the use of human energies, for enterprise, and for the development and application of new skills to new tasks. Through legislation, property relations will become stabilized and firm contractual agreements become possible. These and many other related consequences follow upon political and moral integration which makes explicit the limits of legal and acceptable conduct for the citizen. And this new order, in turn, is necessary to secure through the integration of diverse interests within a stable system of interpersonal and inter-group relationships an effective economic space.

Economic integration. Those activities which are called social or political may be presumed also to include actions which are normally regarded as economic in the more restricted sense. Nonetheless, the problems which arise in regard to the latter deserve special consideration in a treatise on economic growth. Speaking generally, economics treats of the techniques by which goods are produced, distributed, and consumed. Prior to a period of social and political integration, the economy in this limited sense is very often found to be fragmented into a large number of largely self-subsisting production and consumption units: the basic organizing principle will be the family and, in some areas, the nomadic community or tribe. The problem of economic integration is therefore how to move from a familistic to a social economy. No

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longer the primary social unit but the system as a whole, expressed as a regional, national, or even international system of sanctioned order, becomes the organizing principle for economic behaviour. Fragmentation must be succeeded by an integration of economic life.² Four problems arise in this connection: (1) the creation of a common and stable medium of exchange; (2) the creation of a common market for commodities; (3) the introduction of economies of scale; (4) the introduction of techniques for subordination of private to public ends in economic conduct. It is the purpose of the following paragraphs briefly to discuss each of these problems of economic integration in turn.

a. *A common and stable medium of exchange.* This is the *sine qua non* of economic growth: at any one time, over the entire socio-political space, only one system of currency can be valid. Even rudimentary economic knowledge is cognizant of this necessity. A common standard of exchange is primarily an accounting device which readily permits the calculation of equivalent economic values and vastly facilitates the exchange of heterogeneous commodities and services for one another. Thus, it paves the way for the nearly unlimited specialization of labor.

It is by way of such specialization no less than the special-

² The reader may feel that by starting with the familistic economy, a somewhat over-simplified view is proposed. For certainly, the sudden rise of the western European economies from the latter part of the 18th well into the 19th century began from a social base quite different from the one alluded to here. This is true. But it may be argued in partial refutation that the rapid tempo of European development during this period was made possible by the fact that a large measure of social, political, and economic integration already existed, particularly, of course, in England, so that economic growth could be attributed to a significant extent to innovations and the propensities for saving and organization management. Neither Italy nor Germany could make much progress until they had achieved a certain degree of internal unification, and their subsequent growth served to stimulate further this cohesion. But all three of these countries, particularly England and Germany, enjoyed rather comfortable levels of living prior to the industrial revolution which indicates the considerable growth (and integration) that must have taken place during earlier periods. On the other hand, a majority of today's so-called under-developed countries is far more primitive than England, Holland, Germany, or France were at the time of their own more recent economic push, and are thus starting with a severe handicap, i.e., with an almost total lack of social and economic integration.

ization of whole regions that economic growth, in part, occurs. For, if we assume that the maximization of product is the exclusive end of economic activity, the peculiar talents of each person or the distinctive resources and locational advantages of each area may be used to economic advantage only in this way. That specialization incurs consequences of also more dubious value, in no way detracts from its economic significance.

To have within the same social and political space more than one medium of exchange, would in effect signify the existence of as many economic systems as there are valid currencies in circulation.³ Each such economy would strive to be self-sufficient in most essential respects, with the result that certain production activities could not be established at all for lack of an adequate market. Furthermore, the movement of capital and labor would be greatly impeded with consequences that might well end in disaster for a local economy. There is no need to dwell on this point except to say that a common currency, of course, implies a measure of central control over its issue, a control which will determine the terms of its convertibility as well as the quantity of money in circulation. With this, however, we touch already upon the multiple problems of monetary and fiscal policy which fall outside a discussion of economic integration, irrespective of how important they may be in other respects.

b. *A common commodity market.* The elimination of artificial barriers to trade within the effective socio-political space will give rise to a number of consequences important for economic growth and, in particular, will give encouragement to the maximum development of economies of scale. A common unit of exchange is not, by itself, sufficient, though it is a pre-condition to the establishment of a common market. Once more, we are dealing with an elementary principle, in fact so much, that economic integration as such is often meant to refer exclusively to the idea of a common or unified market. In this connection the German *Zollverein* may be recalled, and its importance in es-

³ The same reasoning applies to a society which is divided into a subsistence and a money economy. The former must be absorbed into the latter if a single economic space is to be formed.

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tablishing Germany as a major economic power in central Europe during the last century.

A common market means essentially two things: (1) protection from outside competition and (2) freedom to transfer goods to and from any location within effective political and social space without the payment of duties, tariffs, and the like. The protectionist element in this formula may be varied to some extent and may be either strong or weak. But where it is eliminated altogether, the condition for expansion of a common market area is given, to be succeeded in time by the necessary measures to improve inter-regional transportation and to establish the basic marketing institutions. When this has happened, an economic space, however primitive at first, will have come into being, alongside the already existing political and social space.

As a matter of fact, the consolidation of each of these spaces will help to strengthen the others, and they will become mutually supporting.⁴ It is, of course, far easier to achieve this goal during a time when economic structure in the several regional economies is still developed relatively little. For, at a later date, the existing institutional and economic structures might have been thrown into disequilibrium, requiring a lengthy period of adjustment to the new conditions of the common market, a period during which the relevant economic curves might, in some cases, point down, rather than upwards. This is essentially the problem that must be overcome in order to create a free market area in western Europe today. It did not exist when the thirteen original states merged, under the Constitution, into the United States of America. On the other hand, it cannot be gainsaid that the fragmentation of markets imposes its own limitations upon growth which must eventually be eliminated before further advances can be made.

c. *Economies of scale.* Up to now, the principal problem of integration has appeared to us as the creation of an effective economic space through common coinage and the elimination of

⁴ It is, of course, also conceivable that the creation of an economic space precedes political and social integration, though such procedure would be temporary only, the tendency being for economic unities to require political and social unities as well.

trade barriers. The possibility for achieving important economies of scale was suggested as one of the results of such integration. We now turn to face this question directly, in order to see what the legal and institutional framework would have to be if significant economies of scale are to be obtained. What we have in mind is nothing less than the organizing principles for economic activity as such.

Sufficient analyses have been made to show that the small firm, in many productive and distributive activities, must be considered relatively inefficient, that its output per unit of input is small relative to larger establishments. The optimum scale of organization will not be everywhere the same, but in general, the proposition above would seem to hold. Following this same line of reasoning, it has been argued, that even the consumer is in need of some organized assistance through consumers' councils and the like, in other words, that the individual consumer (let us say, the family), is relatively inefficient unless he takes advantage of the "economies of scale" for research into the merits of different products afforded him by such organizations.

If we observe economic growth processes anywhere in terms of their evolving structure and form—in brief, morphologically—we will recognize in the transformation of the economy a change from an undifferentiated, homogeneous to a highly differentiated, heterogeneous field, with important concentrations, intensities, and dominant and sub-dominant forces within it. To be sure, this is a very abstract and overly simplified description of a concrete and extremely complex process. Nevertheless, it points to an important truth: economic growth reveals itself in the evolution of structure from simple to complex forms, it involves the integration of heretofore isolated, individual activities into larger aggregations and the subsequent integration of these into more or less stable systems of relationship. In the course of this form-building process, economies of scale are obtained. But increases in productivity through progressive economies of scale as well as through other means lie at the root of our conception of the process of economic growth.

The peculiar structure of any economic system is not to be explained as a "natural" fact, but as the result of fundamental legal provisions that define not only property rights and contrac-

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tual relations, but likewise establish the principles and rules intended to regulate potential aggregations of producers, consumers, and investors. These rules may differ from society to society, and certainly some of them may be more effective than others in encouraging the optimum economies of scale while, at the same time, promoting the common good (see section d below).

In looking around for telling examples, we might point at corporation and cooperative as two legal entities through which economic activity is today organized in free-enterprise countries, or at the stock exchange and central banking system. Each of these is intended to promote the large-scale handling of certain kinds of transactions. A different economic system, for example, one based on public ownership and centralized planning, would of course evolve a different legal framework and vocabulary for this purpose.⁵

The important thing about such rules, however, is that they

⁵ Perhaps the most far-reaching of socialist institutions to obtain maximum economies of scale (as well as to reach other important social and political objectives) is the People's Commune recently introduced by Communist China as the basic social unit for "industrial and agricultural production, exchange, and cultural, educational, and political affairs." One of the principal provisions for their establishment is that the property of members, either privately or cooperatively owned, is to be turned over to the Communes for its more efficient management under a system of "centralized leadership and decentralized control." The modern, rationalist character of the Commune, as contrasted to the traditional forms of management common particularly in the rural areas of China, becomes readily apparent from the following requirements (quoted in part):

"Art. 23. The Commune shall introduce planned management and work out long-term construction plans and annual plans in the light of the State economic plans and the concrete conditions of the Commune...."

"Art. 25. The Commune must carry out the principle of industry and thrift. It should set the masses in motion to produce and work hard, make full use of its own strength and overcome difficulties. It should practice rigid economy, reduce production costs, combat waste and unnecessary spending of money, cut non-productive equipment and structures and make do with available things where possible.

"Art. 26. The Commune must institute a strict system of fiscal control. All accounting units must work out budgets of receipts and expenditure on time, observe the system of formalities concerning the use of cash and settle accounts on time...."

From "Provisional Regulations of the Sputnik People's Commune" (Suip'ing hsien, Honan Province), as reported in *Current Affairs Newsletter*, Publication of the United States Information Service, vol. II, no. 3, March 1959, Seoul, Korea.

provide a legal and practical basis for the conduct of economic affairs. Only in this way can a certain degree of permanence, stability, and economic and social order be maintained. In the absence of such legal foundations, wide-spread motivation for economic growth would only lead to disturbances within the social order. From this it follows that any society beyond the rudimentary stages development must evolve a set of legal principles that will help to organise its economic life. It is evident, of course, and derives from what has been said so far, that where these principles attempt to do more than merely establish the *form* of organization and try to shape economic conduct itself by direct interference with the internal structure of formal organizations, that the system so created will tend to be inflexible and ponderous and incapable of generating a high and sustained rate of economic growth. This seems to have been the case with the medieval guild system which was too rigid a structure to cope successfully with the flood of new inventions beginning during the 18th century and therefore was destroyed. Eventually, its place was taken by the modern labor union movement which has apparently been most successful where it has applied itself exclusively to the wage and work benefits of its members rather than to production decisions (workers' councils).

d. *Subordination of private to public ends in economic action.*

By far the most difficult task of economic integration, fraught with dangers that arise from an unbalanced, extreme interpretation of its meaning, is the one alluded to here. To elucidate it, we must be aware of the radically new nature of sustained and rapid economic growth within an effective socio-political space. Such growth requires that public or social ends are placed above private ends in the pursuit of economic objectives. The single-minded devotion to the latter rarely, if ever, existed on any important scale, and the belief that it did must be ranked among man's less charming myths about himself. The individual has always been subordinate to something; with the disappearance of the moral order of the family, the tribe, and the village commune as the basic units of economic organization, it is society-at-large which has to take the place of this source of living values and extend its umbrella of comprehensive objectives and rules of conduct over private activity. This is simply a concomitant to the super-imposition of an

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economic over a socio-political space. The complexities of an economy, with its manifold and intricate human relations, demand some conception and actualization of social, including distributive justice. This is the sense we give to the precedence of public over private ends. Unless the social good is achieved as well as the good of private persons and families, we are faced with a chaotic situation in which each would cut the throat of all the others: we would live in the Spencerian jungle of the survival of the fittest.

At this late date it should no longer be necessary to refute the theories of Spencer and his followers. It should suffice to say that the "struggle for survival," in the old sense, would render any form of coherent social organization impossible, including that required by sustained economic growth. In fact, it would render any significant social development in whatever direction exceedingly doubtful.

The integration of economic activities and the creation of an economic space quite naturally lead to a new conception of economic life, based upon the notion of the common good. Subsistence economy becomes social economy, sometimes also called political economy. In this connection, it will be appropriate to recall the views current during the past century which endeavored to prove a perfect and natural coincidence of private and public ends: the pursuit of hedonistic principles on the part of everyone was imagined to result, through the mechanism of free competition, in the "greatest good of the greatest number" (Bentham). We recall this interpretation at this point to give weight to our own analysis, to show that even during the heyday of free enterprise capitalism, the chase after profits was sanctioned only insofar as it was believed to result in a maximization of pleasure or happiness for the body social. At no time was this chase ever justified on its own grounds. To government was attributed the role of arbitrator: it was to take care that the mechanism of competition worked without undue friction.

Looking back over this early era of industrialism in the West, we can see how this philosophy was inspired by a naive and mechanistic view, how the new miracle of the machine took hold of social thought. Government became a sort of super-mechanic whose principal task was to oil the machine by which the "unseen hand"—much like steam power or electricity—might gently bring

about a worldly paradise. Of course, it did not work this way. Before half a century had passed, the cry for social justice had become too loud to be ignored. In 1848 barricades went up in the streets of Paris and Marx and Engels proclaimed the Communist Manifesto. But already in different parts of Europa, but especially in England, the period of reform capitalism had begun to stir, with governments assuming increased responsibilities for the welfare of their citizens: these early efforts were eventually to culminate in the modern welfare state. On the other hand, those countries to which these ideas of reform failed to spread or spread in time, changed through violent revolution to a socialist economy. Russia, of course, is the preeminent example. In the absence of either of these changes—revolution or basic reform—it is likely that the early spurts of economic growth in the West would have collapsed upon themselves.

Governments in all parts of the world now assumed a decisive role in actively promoting the public good through a balancing of economic powers, the control of trusts and monopolies, the encouragement of collective bargaining, the enactment of social welfare legislation, the institution of public ownership of basic industry, the promotion of equitable schemes of taxation, the formulation of monetary-fiscal policies to control inflation and assure full employment, the institution of planning and budgetary controls, and so forth. Rapidly, government outgrew the mechanic's role that had once been attributed to it. Once again it was recognized—after that brief flirtation with the illusion of an anarchy that would bring benefits to all—that governments have a basic responsibility to the body politic, and that to govern means essentially to make and carry out the laws that will promote the public interest.

Spatial structure. In the preceding sections, I have discussed some of the salient issues in the formation of social, political, and economic space, suggesting that in these might be found the principal means for integration of the social system. I have tried to argue that only through an extension of integrating principles can mere geographic space also become *effective* in any of the three senses referred to. The process of integration was viewed as more than a pre-condition to rapid, sustained growth; it was

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seen as the principal way through which such growth might be achieved.

Wherever we encounter this process working in a particular historical setting, however, we discover that the various forms of integration do not extend to all areas equally, and that at any one time some areas will have reached a more highly developed state of integration than others. A few will be well integrated in all three respects, and some with respect to only one or two, so that the degree of integration, taking the nation as a whole (or any of the larger sub-divisions within it), will differ markedly from one region to the next. We shall propose that the observed differences in economic development among regions may be traced to these differences in integration. Some areas will be well advanced economically, enjoying a corresponding measure of socio-political and economic integration, others will lag considerably behind. This variability may be usefully characterized as economic dualism, though in using this phrase we are conscious of doing some violence to the actual state of affairs. A whole range of economies along a continuum of capital-intensity and integration would represent a more realistic picture. Still, the concept of dualism gives us a convenient tool for analysis. An economy which is so divided into two parts will exhibit, respectively, capitalistic and non-capitalistic features. On the one hand, methods of production will employ large quantities of capital equipment per worker, on the other, production will be directly from hand to mouth *without* the intervention of much capital. This contrast brings with it important structural differences which must be discussed more fully in another place. A study of the economy in terms of a graduated concept of capital-intensity, with due attention being given to the varied degrees of integration, will reveal its characteristic spatial structure. This structure will undergo important transformations in the course of time. But the purpose of such transformations is the complete integration of the economy in terms of space.

What does this mean? Primarily, it suggests the image of creating out of diversity and contrast one coherent and organic social pattern. Specifically, it means to overcome dualism in society. Only when this has been achieved, can we rightfully speak of full success in regard to a policy of economic growth. For

dualism tends to impair growth for the whole of the relevant geographic area once a certain level of development has been attained in any one region.

There are many reasons why dualism should occur. To begin with, economic growth tends to spread outward from the city which is itself a center where social, political, and economic integration has attained its highest level. But any city is, to begin with, a place, delimited in space: its very central position in regard to the area surrounding it, imposes a definite structure of economic and other relationships upon this region. As one moves away from the core of the city, the degree of interation and of integration, at a peak in the center, tends to diminish, except that new urban focal points may be established at certain intervals to help boost the level of integration in areas further away from the original and central core of the system. These urban centers will tend to form a hierarchy of relationship among themselves, based on trade, government, and communication. Where this hierarchy attains to relative maturity, that is, where a full complement of small, medium-sized, and large cities, heterogeneous and homogeneous in function, appears within a region, the degree of integration for that entire region will tend to be high.⁶ At the same time, a relatively advanced level of economic growth will be achieved. Where it is still immature—i.e., where the structure of urban places shows significant gaps—the opposite will be observed: poor integration, low levels of economic growth.

The principal function of the city in economic growth is effectively to organize geographic space in terms of the categories that we have laid down. Social, political, and economic integration takes place only through the agency of urban interest groups and urban institutions, representing the organized and organizing powers of the city. While it is true that the expansion of cities is a consequence of economic growth, they themselves will nonetheless exert a profound influence upon this process. Indeed, the larger cities represent the central stage where the drama of

⁶ For an elaboration of this concept of "maturity," see the author's, "Locational Aspects of Economic Development," *Land Economics*, August 1956, pp. 213-27.

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socio-economic transformation is acted out. Where this effort is not abortive, the spell of the drama will gradually reach out to engulf the entire country and repeat on provincial stages the same sequence of compelling acts. It is through the flourishing of urban ways and institutions and their gradual expansion into the non-capitalistic, backward areas, it is through the multiplication of cities and the increasingly complex interactions between city and city region, that the principles of integration will be applied to ever larger areas and thus eventually will overcome the crippling dualism of societies in transition.

Further research. In the preceding, we have not only worked our way through to what I trust is a new approach to the study and interpretation of economic growth, but we have also broadened the scope of investigations to such an extent that a synthetic solution to the problem of economic growth or, more broadly, to the problem of social transformation, appears to be impossible, accessible at best through a philosophy of history. And yet, if synthetic judgments are not permitted because of the vastness and complexity of the problem, we have been able to extract from the mass of possible observations a few and rather simple categories which will be useful both in undertaking specific studies of growth phenomena and in helping an investigator to order his research materials in such a way as to make sense out of them, in other words, to understand them. Without such categories, no effective research can be done.

These categories may be summarized as follows:

Socio-political integration

1. Creation of an effective social space through:
 - a. transforming local into regional and national loyalties: encouraging a heightened sense of identification with, and responsibility for, social units larger than the village commune or the family group;
 - b. transforming traditional and particularistic into progressive and universalistic values, replacing customary with rationalistic, calculated behavior;
 - c. teaching of a common language to replace existing dialects.

2. Creation of an effective *political* space through:
 - a. extension of the law-making and law-enforcing powers of government over the whole of the relevant geographic area;
 - b. formulation of a uniform legal framework which permits adequate representation of diverse local interests but, at the same time, makes explicit the rights and duties of all citizens, and regulates the possession and use of property as well as conditions of contract. Such a framework must obtain the consent of a large majority of the population.

Economic integration

Creation of an effective *economic* space through:

- a. institution of a common and stable medium of exchange;
- b. institution of a common commodity market;
- c. encouragement of economies of scale through a basic legal framework regulating economic conduct;
- d. sub-ordination of private to public ends in economic action.

Spatial integration

The extension of effective socio-political and economic space over the whole of the relevant geographic area through development of urban institutions.

I am perfectly aware of the impressionistic and cursory examination of these problems that we have just completed, and yet I would maintain the usefulness of even such a condensed review for future research. For the investigator is now prepared to concentrate his attention on the way these several categories have taken on substance in a given area during a period of incipient social transformation. In doing this, it is of course essential that he also bear in mind the multiplicity of factors that are involved in economic growth and that form the usual subject of theoretical and empirical research. But if my understanding of the matter is correct, these factors and the role they play can be interpreted correctly only where they are studied in terms of the essential processes of integration.

THE IDEA OF PROGRESS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

A single powerful idea, that of progress, dominated the nineteenth century and became its main symbol—or so it seemed to Renan when he measured "the enormous strides that the science of man has made during the last one hundred years."¹ Since the waning of the Middle Ages, intellectual progress had gone hand in hand with the rejection of the appeal to authority. Francis Bacon had assigned to this kind of progress a practical goal, and Descartes had provided it with an effective method. It seemed, therefore, that it was capable of going on, for some time at least, by additions to, and a systematic completion of, already existing knowledge. It is in such terms that Pascal described it in the preface to his *Traité sur le vide*, assimilating the development of mankind to that of "a single individual who lives forever and learns con-

Translated by H. Kaal.

¹ *L'Avenir de la science.*

et

tinually." This picture, which became common to all later doctrines of progress, did not specify whether the human species would continue to progress indefinitely, as Condorcet said it would, or whether it would reach a state of old age and decrepitude and eventually become extinct, as Fourier imagined it. When reason, in the eighteenth century, ceased to be the gift of providence to the established political authorities, it became the property of all men, and the standard by which their conduct was to be judged. The progress of the intellect was thus socialized. In Turgot's words, "the entire mass of men is on the move to greater perfection, though a period of calm may alternate with one of agitation, and good with evil, and no matter how slow the movement may be."² This move took place against the background of an immovable nature, and as a result of the spread of enlightenment throughout society; and according to Turgot and his contemporaries, it could not be stopped by ancient institutions that stood in its way. The framework of nature was soon to be shaken when, at the turn of the century, the theories of Kant and Laplace divested the Newtonian order of its appearance of eternity, and when advances in geology and, finally, the transmutationist theories which culminated in Lamarck's *Philosophie zoologique* (1809), seemed to show that both inorganic matter and living species were in the process of transformation. In biology, the criterion of progress was an increase in the specialization of the organism. It is this criterion which Saint-Simon wanted to apply to human societies, reminding us with satisfaction of what he owed to the anatomist Vicq d'Azyr. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, embryological discoveries seemed to show that the biological evolution of man was continuous with that of the lower animals. This gave rise to the idea of a continuous progress, and to the conviction that no valid reason could be found why progress should be confined to the present. The perfection of the individual (sketched tentatively by Condorcet) and the perfection of society found in Saint-Simon, and later on in Spencer, their systematic interpreters; and so did the idea that individual and society were to achieve, either spontaneously or by design, a dynamic equilibrium. Pascal's purely

² *Œuvres*, vol. 2.

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speculative picture was thus transformed into an organic theory of social evolution.

The idea of progress in the eighteenth century remained, in spite of its importance, a secular idea: the property of intellectuals and the sign of an optimistic philosophy. In the nineteenth century, it took on the very different character of a popular ideology; it became charged with emotion, divided classes and parties and inspired social and political upheavals. Two great events separated one century from the other: One was the industrial revolution, which was born in England and brought to France some fifty years later; the other was the French Revolution, which destroyed many ancient institutions and disseminated among the masses the ideas of reason, happiness and progress. The former was not just an intellectual phenomenon, of interest only to the cultured few; it came to have new implications for the economy and for morality. Some feared it, others welcomed it. As a result of the industrial revolution, technical progress ceased to be the curiosity of the salons, and became instead the very condition of the existence of advanced nations. At the same time, there appeared a proletariat that was no longer the inevitable result of general poverty, but a by-product of growing wealth. The improvement of its moral and material lot presented a problem which could not be avoided, and which was far removed from the abstractions of the preceding century. The various kinds of progress, in areas as specific and as diverse as science, technology, the economy, the material and the moral life, institutions, education, etc., were thought to constitute a single progress. This general notion of a single progress was surrounded by value judgements, expressed in terms of destiny, and given an absolute and universal sense. The reason for this lay in the universality of the changes that were taking place: Industrial techniques altered the conditions of life in all Western countries, transformed the class structure and disrupted the received customs. At the same time, and not just by coincidence, the people gained access to politics and gave voice to their aspirations. Old institutions changed, new laws emerged, new nations were born. All these complex changes were wrapped in an ideological dress that showed the dominant influence of the French Revolution. This gave them their common intellectual qualities and emotional

tone. The more-ethical-than-rational aspects of these changes culminated in the idea of progress. Dupréel assigned three defining characteristics to this idea. Progress was, according to him, *inevitable, absolute and universal*,³ and he should have added: *irreversible*. "We all believe firmly in Progress," wrote Proudhon, "as we believe in Liberty and Justice. Everybody, whether a theologian or a philosopher, wheter engaged in speculation or in practice, whether a proletarian or a rich man, is at bottom agreed on this point."⁴ Proudhon did not cite confirmed theocrats like Joseph de Maistre or de Bonald, and he tried to ignore, in his effort to win disciples, the forces of the aristocracy, the clergy and the ruling dynasties, which still offered a powerful resistance. But he was right inasmuch as faith in progress was common to the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

The appearance of progress as a popular creed neatly divides the nineteenth from the preceding centuries. In a tradition-bound society, the sacred values have their origin in a social order that is fixed and rigidly partitioned and contains all human action. In Western Europe, Christian eschatology had created a purely spiritual order: Between the fall of man and his resurrection, life on earth was but a narrow passage, bounded by the revelations of the past and of the future. It was in this order that an idea of intellectual progress, foreign to all revelation, was to find its place eventually. But the order and its divisions were by their very nature sacred. They thrived on the great myths of the past which placed chaos at the beginning of the world and the golden age at the beginning of mankind. The idea of progress destroyed this dramatic unity of primordial time: Chaos remained in the past; but the golden age was projected into the future, as the goal towards which progress was to lead mankind—and this in spite of wars, catastrophes and misery; for these came to be regarded as vestiges of the original chaos, destined to be absorbed, or to be overcome, by progress. This is how progress acquired its sacred character, in the course of appropriating popular beliefs and becoming, in turn, the object of popular faith. The golden

³ *Deux essais sur le progrès.*

⁴ *De la justice dans la Révolution et dans l'Eglise.* Ninth Study.

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age of the future was the end that all aspirations for spiritual goods and physical well-being had in view. This is what Saint-Simon had in mind when he proclaimed his faith in a better world to come: "The golden age of the human species does not lie behind us, but ahead of us. It consists in the perfection of the social order. Our fathers did not live to see it, but our children will, one day. It is our task to clear the way for them."⁵ However, there was much disagreement among people of different classes and of different political persuasions, as to what constituted progress, especially when the term came to be applied to such social or economic categories as property, industry, the nation, the people, the proletariat, etc., to which were later to be added the ideas of association and the right to work. These came to be the stakes in the political contest; they were the motives behind conflicts and passions; and all of them took on a sacred character, with the ambiguity that is at the bottom of everything sacred. If we combine these categories in different ways, we obtain the great intellectual and political currents that made, at times, for the continuity of the century and, at other times, for the disruptions in its flow. These currents were given a variety of ideological justifications: Some described progress as the victory of reason over superstition, others as the meaning of history, conceived in moral and affective terms, and others still, as the substance behind such ethical abstractions as liberty and justice. Some traced the origin of progress to primitive Christianity, others to the philosophy of the enlightenment, and others to Greek stoicism. Progress had a protean shape and presented contradictory faces. Yet it was thought, by the reformers, to hold the keys to the future.

One cannot even give a succinct account of the ideas of progress in the nineteenth century without mentioning that they were descended, for the most part, from Condorcet, though not without undergoing modifications on certain important points. This descent, as varied as it was contradictory, is perhaps explained by the fact that Condorcet's *Esquisse d'un tableau des progrès de l'esprit humain* was not written in his quiet retreat at Auteuil, but in the turmoil of the Revolution and under the immediate threat of death. These circumstances gave his work an emotional

⁵ *De la réorganisation de la société européenne.*

impact that was not to be had from the text. Progress, according to Condorcet, did not depend on forces outside man, like providence, history or the laws of economics. It was demanded by reason when guided by knowledge of the laws of nature, and it resulted from the battle between the forces of light and of darkness, and the victory of truth over error—though the outcome of the war remained in doubt as long as error persisted alongside truth. This is why Condorcet, at the Convention, spoke in defence of "the freedom to err," against the dogmatism of Robespierre. History had been a succession of advances and retreats. Achievements in the sciences now made any new retreats impossible, but only if reason governed both virtue and happiness. "The achievements of these latter days have done much for the progress of the human mind, but little for the perfection of the human species, much for the glory of man, a little bit for his freedom, and still almost nothing for his happiness."⁶ Error might survive because of differences in education, and because of the obstacles put, by the privileged classes, in the way of the destruction of prejudice. This theme was to be exploited by the democrats of the nineteenth century, who accused the liberals of blocking the march of progress when it threatened their interests. Since Condorcet looked upon truth as a process, he proposed in 1793 a truly heraclitean constitution, which was to be revised every twenty years, to take into account the continuity of progress. Its aim was to create an open society, bordering on anarchy, which would assure each individual the means of cultivating his reason and of achieving happiness.

Condorcet regarded unlimited perfectibility as the privilege of the individual, and not of the State or some other collective body. This seemed to him to imply that individual liberty and social equality could only be extended simultaneously to all men. But the liberalists found it easy enough to dissociate the two concepts. The liberal conservatives began with the free play of supply and demand, and wound up by assimilating the effective pursuit of one's interests to one of the natural rights of man. According to Thiers, the free and unlimited exercise of our faculties had as its basis "the holy, the sacred institution of

⁶ *Esquisse*, Part. 9.

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property," which was an expression of our "obedience to, and respect for, nature herself." Progress demanded inequality of social conditions: "Wealth and poverty go arm in arm, each providing the other with its enjoyments," and they would continue indefinitely in this way because the right to inherit property was sacred. Thiers thought he was strengthening his case when he added that to eradicate misery "would be to spoil God's work by trying to improve it." The liberal democrats, on the other hand, emphasized the spread of social equality. According to Tocqueville, this was a law of history, and not necessarily bound up with the spread of knowledge. For, as he put it in his *Démocratie en Amérique*, it was a fact that "the sublime and almost divine love of truth" had a better chance of spreading among an idle aristocracy than in a democracy of laborers who showed the spirit of initiative and enjoyed economic freedom. According to him, aristocratic societies conceived only of gradual improvement, not of sudden change. Addressing his European audience, Tocqueville wrote: "If the people of our day could be brought, by sincere reflection, to realize that the gradual and progressive development of equality constitutes, at one and the same time, the past and the future of their history, this discovery alone would give to this development the sacred character that belongs to the will of our sovereign lord. To try to stop democracy would then appear to be to fight against God Himself, and all that a nation could do would be to accommodate itself to the social system that Providence imposed on it." To conclude, the most democratic countries pointed the way to the rest. Marx took up this opinion, but replaced the word "democratic" by "capitalist."

Thiers wrote in apparent ignorance of the industrial reality of his time, and Tocqueville showed in his work no interest in labor problems. They took up the same aloof position as Condorcet, who had made no allusion to the coming of big industry. But if, in the eighteenth century, science and technology went their separate ways, if Watt's inventions preceded the advent of thermodynamics by fifty years, and if the inventions of Hargreaves, Artwright and Crompton had no connection with d'Alembert's mechanics, this was to change in the following

⁷ *De la propriété.*

century. Socialist reformers had always paid their respects to science, in its exalted position as witness to, and creator of, progress; but of technology, they would only recognize the painful effects on the proletariat. In making plans for the organization of labor, they only aimed at a coordination of jobs, and not at an integration of functions, which had already been achieved in the textile industry, but in which they only saw the evils of capitalism, and not the technical achievement that it also was. Liberal writers looked upon the misery of the working classes as a ransom to be paid for progress for the time being, until an even greater technical and economic progress could overcome this misery. Socialist writers vacillated between the profound pessimism of Sismondi and the hopes they put into their schemes for organizing labor. We can follow this vacillation in Louis Blanc, for example, who asks: "Could people be condemned to go around in circles, without pause and in total darkness, like those blind horses who create, by their exertions, a movement whose purpose they ignore?" A few lines further, but still on the same page, after having called his earlier words impious and blasphemous, he concludes: "Let us guard our beliefs, and let us not despair, even when, by the decrees of God, the good cannot, alas, flourish before the bad is utterly exhausted."⁸

The Romantic socialists of the 1830's gained their faith in progress through a religious or mystical revival. The most frequently recurring theme was that the political revolution, the wars of the Empire, and the industrial revolution were stages in a new fall of man. The proletarians, who were treated by the bourgeoisie and even by the followers of Saint-Simon as barbarians, and who were, in fact, barbarians in the Greek sense of the word, since they were excluded from the society of the liberals, would become the new collective Christ and take on the mission of redeeming society. French socialists thus attributed to the proletariat a religious mission (a theme which was to be taken up by Marx, who attributed to the proletariat the historic mission of overpowering and outdistancing the bourgeoisie). Its mission was to revive, by putting into practice the idea of association, the

⁸ *Histoire de dix ans*, Introduction.

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purity and simplicity found in the primitive Christian communities which put an end to Roman corruption.

Among these socialists, Pierre Leroux deserves special attention. Although he influenced writers as different from one another as Vigny, Hugo and Baudelaire, he tends to be forgotten nowadays. Yet to my knowledge, he was the first to raise the question whether a socialist order was compatible with individual liberty. If society as an aggregate of isolated individuals, then the good would be exploited by the bad; and if it was an organic whole, as the followers of Saint-Simon would have it, then despotism and the end of liberty would be the result. Society had, therefore, to be based on a moral solidarity that was perfect "by reason of the freedom of all and each."⁹ But society had to be more than that, namely, a true "mystic body." Man led a double life since he was, on the one hand, an actual free being, and on the other, a potential being—a mere fragment of the ideal, permanent and collective being which was what we called "mankind," and which yielded a real man by a process of actualization and particularization. Since every society had a religion, and since science had put an end to Christianity, our society would be destroyed unless the new religion of Pierre Leroux came to take the place of the old one. Democracy was part of this religion. In fact, if "it is not a religion, every democratic revolution is a crime."¹⁰ Mankind was a "being-in-process," which inhabited what we now call "space-time," and provided a continuous chain between the generations of men. Leroux borrowed the principle of continuity from Leibniz, as well as from Comte who had made use of it in 1822. Progress, for Leroux, was thus assured by less than catastrophic leaps, and it was to take man to the realm ruled by an economic and emotional union which guaranteed justice and equality. Leroux had been a disciple of Saint-Simon, but all he retained from his master was the altruistic element, which he inflated beyond all proportion in order to save the individual by mystical means.

It was also for the sake of saving the individual in the forward

⁹ *Revue encyclopédique*, October 1833.

¹⁰ *Revue encyclopédique*, August 1832.

march of society, that Proudhon looked for an absolute which stood outside the actual movement, but guided it just the same in the direction of what he took to be true progress. Since he was irreligious and, in his own word, "antitheist," his absolute could *not* be mankind, conceived in mystical terms and as the social manifestation of God, but had to be an abstract principle. But if mankind was conceived to be as variable as individual men, it lacked all the sacred qualities, being merely the collective entity derived by abstraction from the nature of the individual. However, the individual had a second nature, which was purely personal.¹¹ Proudhon therefore placed his absolute in the very heart of man—in the sentiment of justice, and in the respect for moral obligations that followed from this sentiment. Progress was not a matter of technological advance: "Do not expect," he wrote, "that the people will idealize your railways which serve to enslave them, your machines which, in replacing them, degrade them, your banks where the products of their sweat gather interests, your buildings which will never house their misery."¹²

Nor was progress a matter of metaphysical or religious principles outside the individual. And freedom was not the consciousness of necessity that Hegel claimed it was, but something that governed knowledge and institutions. There was indeed a general movement known as organic evolution, but, he wrote, "there is reason to believe that there is, in the human species, a deeper movement which embraces and modifies all the others; and this is the movement of Liberty and Justice." And it was this movement, which was essentially moral and private, which constituted true progress. The indispensable instrument of this progress was, in his view, the idea of a revolution in both the economic and the moral sphere. The political changes that were actually taking place did not further true progress, because they kept man in his

¹¹ The doctrine of the two natures of man, an individual and a generic nature, recurred in the writings of the young Marx; cf. *On the Jewish Question*.

¹² *De la justice dans la Révolution et dans l'Eglise*, Ninth Study. This text is open to Baudelaire's sarcastic comments (*Curiosités esthétiques*, Salon of 1855) on the "philosophers of steam and chemical matches."

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role as servant to a society ruled, still, by "wealth, lust and power."

The Romantic socialists, like Proudhon, did not strip progress of its sacred, mystical or moral dress, so that a religious person could still believe in progress, and the just man be convinced of it. Their concern was to save man from being a wheel in a deterministic universe. Saint-Simon and Comte, on the other hand, defined progress by appealing to the scientific determinism of the time. Like Condorcet, they identified all progress with intellectual progress, but unlike him, did not consider religion to be opposed to science: They rationalized religious beliefs by turning them into metaphorical and incomplete answers to the physical and social problems confronting mankind. Science now assumed the sacred character that had belonged to progress, and science dictated progress, giving it its aim and direction. The absolute that governed the movement of the universe and the march of mankind was the Law—the permanent order of inorganic and of living things. Its apprehension by the mind was the source of all progress. History had, therefore, to be studied and explained. A true knowledge of history would become the foundation of a "science of man" which, in its scientific perfection, would dispel the metaphysical clouds and social illusions that befogged the human brain. There was a progressive law of continuity which Saint-Simon expressed as follows: "All the things that have happened, and all the things that will, form one and the same series. The earlier members of this series constitute the past, and its later members the future."¹³ But this linear series left out the manichean conflict between truth and error which the Encyclopedists had imagined. For them, reason had been the product of an invariable nature. For Saint-Simon, it was the process of adaptation to reality, or the process by which mankind adapted itself to its conditions, as shown by the changes in human institutions. Perfectibility was no longer the privilege of the individual, as it had been for Condorcet, but of the social organism. Society had achieved the full dignity of an existing thing. Its principal attribute, at a given time, was the rationalized religion of the time, known as "the most general idea." This idea distinguished the conduct of men in a given period.

¹³ *Mémoire sur la science de l'homme*, First Instalment.

Since Condorcet took reason to be invariable, he could project his own reason into the past in trying to assess past errors. Saint-Simon, too, projected his own reason into the past, forgetting, however, that he was committed to the view that reason was relative to a given time. He conceived all societies in the image of his own industrial system, and described them as if a number of clerical workers had come together to work out in advance the religious principles that were, in their opinion, useful for preserving the social body, or for speeding up its forward march. Since chance and freedom were excluded, every society had its origin in a project formulated in advance, and similar in type to the project that Saint-Simon would have liked to see adopted by nineteenth-century society.

Saint-Simon borrowed from Vicq d'Azyr the notion that biological progress depended on a growing complexity of the organism, and deduced from this that the best criterion of social progress was the growing perfection of institutions. In times of crisis, social conflicts could no longer be contained by existing institutions, and this was the sign that new progress had to be made. It is clear at which point Saint-Simon's dialectic became opposed to Marx's: For Saint-Simon, consciousness preceded existence, or to use Marx's terminology, the superstructure determined the structure. Crises had the purpose of goading on the mind which, in their absence, would lapse into self-satisfaction, and of leading it to create a new period in the life of the social organism. Times of crisis had, then, a positive role, since they allowed the mind to regain consciousness of the need for progress. Before the fifteenth century, progress had been "in itself," but since the beginning of that century, had become, in this sense, "for itself." The advent of the industrial society of the future would, once and for all, put an end to the crises of modern times. But its advent presupposed the development of a particular science, that of man, and the coming of "the most general idea"—in this case, a positivistic philosophy, capable of reorganizing society.

Comte's conception of progress passed through the law of the three stages, which had been suggested to him by Dr. Burdin and Saint-Simon. But in Comte's final analysis, progress reduced to a spontaneous instinct for perfection. Translated into history, this

instinct appeared as the gradual substitution of reason for imagination, and as the reconciliation of heart and mind, or sentiment and reason. Progress was the means to order, and prepared the way for it. We can see how, in the development of Comte's work and, above all, in his later philosophy, progress ceased to have the sacred value that Saint-Simon attributed to it, and how it became the mere instrument of order, while order rose to the rank of the *summum bonum*. At this point, Comte broke the chain which, through his master, linked him with Condorcet: Order certainly remained a product of reason; but reason was now no more than the servant of a principle superior to it.

The difference between Saint-Simon and Marx lay not only in the inversion of the moving forces of history; it lay also in the different historical roles attributed to social conflict. According to Marx, conflict was the agent of change, and according to Saint-Simon, the sign that called for change. As a result, the element of change resided, for Marx, in society, or more precisely, in its class structure, whereas for Saint-Simon, it resided in those actions of the religious and civil authorities that were prompted by conflict. If there is a notion of progress in Marx's writings which is not expressed by the use of the word "progress," it cannot lie in a more positivistic philosophy or in a more careful organization of society; it must lie in the fact, according to Marx, that the number of existing classes tends to diminish, and the resulting struggles tend to become simpler, before classes, and the struggles they engender, are abolished once and for all.

Saint-Simon was obsessed with the cause-effect relationship—which Comte, later on, disregarded. The fact that monotheism had succeeded polytheism seemed, to Saint-Simon, to imply that progress consisted in the reduction of multiple causes to a single cause. He assimilated the state of modern science to polytheism, and like the Encyclopedists before him, thought he could vaguely discern the single cause towards which progress was moving, in universal gravitation. Since the time of the Pharaohs, he claimed, every society was in part a hierarchy composed of a minority of *thinkers* and a majority of *believers*. Since the two were intellectually out of phase, a religion or a morality was needed, for the use of believers, to ensure "social hygiene." Morality, conceived in this way, was to become Comte's seventh science. For Saint-

Simon, the task for his time was to fill the void left by the demise of Christianity, and to find sacred values that were respected by all. The first of these values was science: "Scientific beliefs," he wrote around 1808, "must in future be dressed up in such a way as to become sacred, and be taught in this form to children of all classes and to the ignorant of all ages."¹⁴ The second value was love or fraternity—which Comte was to change into altruism. In 1825, Saint-Simon founded "the New Christianity"—out of which Comte was to fashion his religion of Humanity. By this time, Saint-Simon had reduced his sacred values to the single principle of solidarity. His new religion was to have the purpose of improving the material and moral lot of the proletariat. But this improvement included neither liberty nor equality. "The vague and metaphysical idea of liberty is opposed to the development of civilization, and to the establishment of a well-ordered system since this requires that all parts be firmly tied to the whole, and dependent on it."¹⁵ The Bible would be prohibited because its study would "incite the people to establish, in society, an equality which is absolutely impracticable."¹⁶ The religion of the positivists reduced thus to a mixture of divine philanthropy and theocratic order.

Saint-Simon compared the individual who was deprived of liberty and unacquainted with equality to the wheel of a clock whose movements were completely determined. Later on, Auguste Comte denied the individual even his freedom of physical motion, when he wrote: "A society can be decomposed into individuals only to the extent that a geometrical plane can be decomposed into lines, or a line into points."¹⁷ The task of guiding progress fell then to the religious authorities alone, and the task of realizing it to the civil authorities. Such progress could no longer modify either the industrial society that had learned to obey science, or the new Christianity which Saint-Simon characterized as "definitive." However, progress still seemed to permit

¹⁴ *Introduction aux travaux scientifiques du XIX^e siècle.*

¹⁵ *Système industriel.*

¹⁶ *Le Nouveau Christianisme.*

¹⁷ *Discours sur l'esprit positif.*

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scientific research, though Comte, in his society, limited research to social or institutional needs. At this stage, the society envisaged by the positivists rejoined and, in the end, absorbed, into an immovable and sacred order, the society envisaged by those theocrats who were the most hostile to all progress. One could also draw a close parallel between Hegel's dialectical progress and the progress of the positivists. Each led to a closed society—closed both in space and in time—and each society monopolized an Idea, pretended that its Idea was absolute or definitive, and came thus naturally to thwart any other idea that could only become effective by being realized in space and time. The individual envisaged by the positivists was what might be called a "functional man"—one who fitted perfectly into the technical hierarchy of an industrial enterprise. The industrial society of the positivists was to produce such men on a large scale, on all levels of "abilities," and once and for all.

The fabrications of Saint-Simon and his disciples should be contrasted with what Fourier, the arch enemy of the positivists, thought of them: "They have assembled a few antiques, plastered them up, and put them on the stage where they will rouse the rabble; they have added a few rags of atheism and theocracy, and try to pass this off as the art of association."¹⁸ He found their idea of progress vicious, and accused them of trying to build on the ruins of property "a meretricious theory of sympathy and love, the generalized version of mortmain and the agrarian laws."¹⁹ The liberals went along with such strictures. But Fourier went further: He reviled the "uncertain" or "rebellious" sciences, that is, the social sciences cherished by the positivists, on the ground that they served to "prolong the social inferno" and to inspire a "truly crablike progress." He thundered against the positivists: "They have too much at stake to lift the darkness that surrounds the human mind...it lies there, rocked to sleep by the chimera of progress."²⁰ Fourier was, nevertheless, a partisan of progress: "A

¹⁸ "Les Torpilles du progrès," *Le Phalanstère*, August 1832.

¹⁹ *Pièges et charlatanisme des deux sectes Saint-Simon et Owen*.

²⁰ "Les torrents de ténèbres et de petitesse chez les hommes," *Le Phalanstère*, February 1834.

society may go forwards as well as backwards," he wrote, "we need reliable rules to distinguish progress from decline."²¹ He refused to extract these rules from the rationalism of the eighteenth century, because the failure of the Revolution proved such rationalism to be bankrupt, but looked instead to a hylozoism borrowed more or less from Swedenborg, to the revivalist sects, and to Schelling. The principle of association between men was, in his view, worth nothing, unless it was the manifestation, on earth and in society, of a law of attraction which animated the universe, governed all living things, and could be defined as "the unrehearsed concert between creator and creature."²² Fourier applied to life on earth the stoic idea of recurrent cycles. Each cycle was divided into two equal phases, one of progress and one of decline. At the end of the latter, mankind would emigrate to other planets. Progress was defined as the passage from one stage in the first phase to another: When "civilization" became corrupt and too old, it had to give way to a kind of industrial feudalism, and this in turn had to give way to "harmony." Nature took part in progress, by undergoing concomitant changes. The moving force behind human progress was the purging of the passions. Society would gain a new equilibrium only after reason and the passions converged—reason being the consciousness of universal attraction. Passions were always good; only society had become vicious. Starting with this formula, which Helvetius would have endorsed, Fourier combined the passions in such a way as to form the most effective striking force in the battle for the greater perfection of human associations. By means of the passions, Fourier sought to resolve the antinomy between the individual and the social group. To Saint-Simon's integration of the individual in the social hierarchy, Fourier opposed the free participation of the individual; the individual would, in fact, participate because, to do so, would be profitable or "attractive" to him. There was no longer anything sacred in human associations, since Fourier had transferred the sacred to the universe. The individual formed part of the deified universe through his passions, which were

²¹ "Mystification des chantres du progrès." *Le Phalanstère*, September 1833.

²² *Théorie de l'unité universelle*, vol. 2.

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nothing but the absolute and permanent element in the progress of happiness.

In times of transition that are marked by such a significant convergence of all the major changes, one can find ideas and beliefs that reflect the common hope for a more harmonious future. It would be interesting to draw a parallel between the ideas of progress in the nineteenth century and the millenarian movements of the eighteenth century (and the sixteenth). The third age of Joachim de Fiore, in which the Paraclete was to reign, could be compared to Comte's positivistic state, to Leroux's religious state, to Fourier's "harmony," to Marx's communist society, and even to Condorcet's rational world. In each case, the Holy Spirit could be shown to rule in some form or other.

All these conceptions betray, in spite of their diversity, the common hope of creating social harmony out of chaos. Each theorist or prophet attached a different meaning to this harmony; but this was, nevertheless, one of the points at which the beliefs of the time, which had as many emotional as rational implications, made contact. How this harmony was imagined depended, first of all, on how progress was conceived. If progress was only a means, it came in the end to be absorbed by the final order. If it appeared in sacred dress, with strong affective undertones, and demanded sacrifices, it survived the new order, which continued to evolve. Most socialist authors of the period (except, to some extent, Proudhon) believed in the identification of the individual with society, but held that this process was never to be completed. The hope of the individual to overcome his necessary limitations would thus be continually nourished by the elusive prospect of identification with society. This is what those authors had in mind who thought of progress in mystical terms, or else looked to progress for the partial satisfaction of those human passions that were never to become extinct.

We have seen that the idea of a single progress for all of mankind could only arise because of the extraordinary convergence of changes, which marked the beginning of the nineteenth century in Europe. In spite of internal conflicts, and sometimes because of them, progress in science and technology led to improvements in the material lot of the masses, giving thus the lie to Marx's forecasts. It seemed at the time that European civilization

would find no limits to its geographical expansion, and that European ways of thinking and acting would be imposed on the rest of mankind. Thus the dream of primordial unity, which had obsessed the human mind for thousands of years, would finally come true. The political principles, the moral rules and even the utopian expectations of Europe would become the property of the entire world. In Europe itself, the scarcity of wars and their short duration, as well as the slow but irreversible accession of the masses to the political leadership of nations, seemed to usher in the reign of brotherhood. At the same time, the secularization of archaic customs and institutions seemed to prepare the way for the intellectual, moral and sexual emancipation of the individual. This was the legacy of the nineteenth century to ours.

The convergence of trends and their expansion came to a sudden halt in the twentieth century. The reassuring concept of determinism came to be questioned in the course of scientific progress, and scientific explanation left behind the sensible models by which it had remained familiar to most minds. This left a void between real life and the constructions of reason, and gave rise to such disturbing reflections as Cournot's on the opposition between vitalism and rationalism. As Nietzsche had foreseen, technical progress became a much more effective means of destruction than of construction: Progress in the means of destruction went on at a much more rapid rate. Foreign and civil wars not only exceeded in magnitude and duration anything the nineteenth century had known, but brought on a resurgence of inhuman sentiments. These broke through the thin layer of civilization, which would have been unthinkable in the nineteenth century, when progress was taken to go together with the thickening and stabilization of the strata on which civilization rested. The convergence of advances in technology and the spread of liberal institutions, which was a typically European phenomenon, came to an abrupt end. New nations on different continents now borrow the technical methods of old Europe, but introduce them into a completely different economic and political context. Finally, the world is broken up into two types of society. These live in such isolation, and have such different conceptions of human relationships and of the place of the individual, that the obstacles to an objective and disinterested exchange between them appear almost insurmountable. In those

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countries in which society reserves all initiative for itself, and limits the individual to his social function alone, the political and administrative authorities monopolize the truth for their own private use, and in order to preserve society as a whole, leave to the rest of society only a semblance of truth.

There is now no common purpose that could unite all men without governmental interference, and no spontaneous movement towards larger social units. In the absence of such convergence and expansion, we cannot profitably speak of progress in the absolute, inevitable, universal and irreversible sense of the preceding century. The modern world is divided and chaotic and full of unforeseeable possibilities. Our ends have become obscure, while, our means have been greatly developed. Since our ends are problematic, they can hardly elicit systematic ideologies of the kind that, in the nineteenth century, claimed to give a complete interpretation of historical phenomena.

NOTES AND DISCUSSION

Pierre Burgelin

ON THE TRANSITION

FROM THE SACRED TO THE PROFANE

We live in a universe infinitely more complex than that which is evoked by the word *reality*. Only the desire for pragmatic knowledge allows us to believe that things are simply that which they are: the bearers of material qualities by which we distinguish or manipulate them. We give them names, which designate their *genre*, and make use of them according to our fancy. They are tools or means which refer us to other things to which they have a relation. When knowledge is elevated to a science, in doing away with appearances we discover their structure, and new types of relations, expressed in the language of figures and numbers, beyond which there is only the possibility of other structures and other numbers. The object is explained either by the finiteness of human needs or by the network of scientific relations. It is what it is, nothing more.

Translated by T. Jaeger.

On the Transition from the Sacred to the Profane

Now usefulness or cold scientific curiosity are not the only aspects of this object which have meaning for us. Sometimes it speaks to us in its uniqueness; it is more than itself, it evokes other universes. Here it is an aesthetic object, related to a whole world of brilliant lights, or else it refers to our past and becomes a relic. It can be a carrier of the sacred. Then it touches us and awakes differing affective attitudes in us. In contrast to the positivists shallowness, we will say that our universe has depth, that that which is apparent refers to a background, to other worlds which are glimpsed through a veil, offered but not given. A presence is manifest here, values haunt our universe.

The sacred is one of these haunting values focused in an object. It is only in a second, derived sense that a society or an authority can declare a being sacred without necessarily referring to an affective experience. There is a purely social sacredness. There can be also a shade of the sacred attached to other values: memory, art, morality. But in itself the sacred provokes a specific attitude which Rudolf Otto, in his classic work,¹ defines by a fundamental ambivalence: the sacred object presents itself as at the same time terrifying and fascinating. When our senses perceive only an indifferent object, identical to many others, the sacred has the unique characteristic of containing a mysterious and fantastic power, beneficent and redoubtable, whose true nature often becomes apparent only in the misfortunes brought about by sacrilege. The sacred is the point of contact with the obscure background, with the mysterious, with unpredictable powers which one dare not approach without precautions. A taboo forbids it. One can approach the sacred only by respecting particular forms, purifications, rites. To make the attempt is a sin, a soiling, but not, generally, a moral fault. The violation of the prohibition unleashes misfortune and introduces anarchy into the order of the world. Although Oedipus committed incest without knowing it, disorder was introduced into the innocent city of Thebes. The sacrilegious act calls for harsh expiation in order to calm the maleficent powers which were imprudently unchained. Sociologists have spoken of a "mystic" mentality, where technical, social, moral and aesthetic activities are involved in a certain way in this mysterious world,

¹ *Le Sacré*, trad. fr. Paris, 1929, p. 57.

where no action has full significance in itself, and where propitiatory rites are always necessary: where all of life has reference to the sacred.

By this tie with the order of the world, the sacred achieves an ontological significance which distinguishes it from other values. Nothing is neutral in nature, nothing has sufficient reality in itself. The real is the supernatural, the ensemble of hidden powers to be respected, seduced, awakened, calmed, or utilized. Through the object, we are in communication with the sources of order and of disorder. These interventions of the occult give rise to a terror before the unforeseeable, before ruptures provoked by its intrusions into known nature, but also the certitude of efficacious protection when everything has been accomplished as is proper. According to the particular case, the sacred may be beneficent or maleficent, asylum or death. It appears in the distance separating the will from its effect, success from failure; in short, in that twilight zone which we call change, where our superstitions still insist that the characteristic incident, the crow rising from the left, the spilt salt, governs conduct more authentically than skill or prudence.

Thus the sacred, recognized and codified by tradition, takes up a function in society. It organizes the time and place of groups, protects the threshold, the door, the walls, marks the time of festivals and ceremonies where a people's unity is forged; it presides over institutions. But if it organizes, it also limits; it determines an exterior and an interior, a before and an afterwards. Perhaps it is at the threshold that one should place the distinction between the sacred and the profane, at the transition from the *fanum* to the *pro-fanum*, from the sanctuary where the sacred is as it were condensed, to the public place which has quite other characteristics. The localization in place (the temple) and in time (the ceremony) introduces a dualism: two ways of being are in opposition, two universes obeying two laws. If there are sacred places and days, circumstances, men, objects, words or languages, the profane, in its negative aspect, is that which escapes this regimentation. In its positive aspect, in the realm of the profane, change becomes possible, choice is allowed. Here liberty and responsibility blossom. Here reverential fear ceases and curiosity begins. The rational can be established. The analysis of causes and effects, of means and ends, permits a new order on the human ladder, an order that is

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understood and desired. The realms of the profane call on technique, not on ritual.

Abandoned in a profane world where values, like things, have become detached from the sacred, where everything can be explored and exploited, man, rid of protection and threats, must take over his own identity, carry out his own exploits according to his own powers, build a universe which is his own. We live today in a civilization which wants to be profane, but is not without some concern when it reflects on its own uprootedness. It is not, certainly, that the sacred has totally disappeared from our world. Traditionally, religions organize and interpret, channel and limit the sacred: there are still sanctuaries, cults, sacraments and even miracles. On a completely different level, we see clearly that the most ancient superstitions are still alive, and sometime insert themselves into the mythology of our daily newspapers. We even see new forms of the sacred appearing, or the resurgence of ancient forms: the prestige of pure blood has resuscitated a religion, the flame is lit on tombstones, countries have their sacred places and venerated emblems. Nonetheless, in spite of everything that shows us that the need for contact with mysterious powers is reborn all the time and everywhere, a long evolution, begun at the height of the Middle Ages and manifest especially since the Renaissance, tends continually to increase the spread of the profane, to de-sacralize values, to establish all our activities within the embrace of a single completely human world, without reference to the immanence of the supernatural.

The outstanding instrument of the intellectual revolution of the West has been science. It presupposes profanation, and is that which renders profane. It has become the frame of reference of truth, the point where the world is manifest as supremely real. Now, that which constitutes science is controllable experience. Control implies an object manipulated without precautions, if necessary transformed, divided, submitted to all possible conditions. Control has no reference to anything that is not *natural*. We will not be astonished, then, that the fight of scientific rationalism has been directed above all at the miracle, at this trickery which is the inopportune intervention of the Sacred in the order of things, and secondly against the finality which presupposes an intimate power of organization. The world can only be that of inertia, of a passivity

entirely determined by laws which constitute a completely closed system, without a crack. Of course, the human being enters into the natural order as well, and makes himself an object of the sciences (and the sacred too, as representation or conductor, cannot be an exception). In short, man's possibility of exercising his power has as its only limit the resistance of a nature which one can command only by obeying it, that is by understanding it. And if philosophy demands a first being to bring about the existence and intelligibility of nature, it can only intervene as a beginning and not as a force intervening in the course of things.

The profane world, then, is totally bound to the exercise of our liberty—liberty felt and wanted before knowledge has even shown us all its possibilities. One can see it for instance in the first attempts of man to construct a social order which would finally be rational. It was necessary, by means of sacrilege, to attack the sacred symbols of the *ancien régime*, and to invoke magically the sacred words of liberty and equality to make the new order take shape. The sacred of the institution is simply transformed into the sacred of principles. But one must go as far as the profanation of the principles themselves in order to understand that words are not sufficient to transform structures and give a positive content. The passions of men can only be defeated by the analysis which makes them understandable and places them in a context.

The world will be completely understood by science if it can be totally remade. The sacred will be torn away bit by bit from all its refuges, and from nature itself to which it has retreated. Nature is not untouchable, geography does not describe a world which is given, once and for all. Our earth is an ensemble of materials, of hidden sources of energy; we will sound its depths, turn its rivers from their courses, cultivate its deserts. There remains the fact that nature still has its angers, its imperfect cycles, in short its disorder and its chance. It is still attached to destiny. The technical world no longer has any right to these disorders which simply manifest our own insufficiency. The fortuitousness of catastrophes, of sickness and death, even the fortuitousness of our premature decisions: everything will finally enter into our equations and let itself be handled by machine.

We do not move towards such a perfect universe without hesitations. Explanation leaves us dissatisfied in the realm of justifi-

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cation. If the sacred has hardly any real ontological significance for us, it still exists in a psychological form, as an objectivating projection of anxiety, as an interpretation of the world through ancestral "archetypes" of our unconscious. As Duméry says, it will be "the projection onto a thing of the aspiration and intention of the subject." Establishing the exteriority of the sacred is our means of re-attaining an interiority which is being lost. Man "finds, through the exterior world, that which defines him as subjectivity, he expresses his most profound imaginative flight, his need for the absolute."² But how, then, can one escape from the feeling that the sacred, projected thus, is finally only a mystification?

A remark is necessary: this exigency of a completely profane world is a characteristic of our civilization, and spreads with it to peoples whose religious traditions are more deeply rooted than those of the West. What relation is there between this exigency and the theological reflection of the West? If the word *divine* can designate the nebulosity of the mysterious power implied in the sacred (at the risk of distinguishing degrees within the supernatural, such as the demoniac for example), it is not yet apparent how God can be involved in this affair. Rudolf Otto declares that sacred means relationship to the absolute. It is, however, a capital fact of our history that, from its first stutterings, theological reflection has engaged itself in distinguishing between the divine and the sacred. Werner Jaeger has shown how the pre-Socratics already searched for the theological purification which disengaged its object from the religious sacralization of the Greeks. It is a fact that Plato was far from being a stranger to the religion of mysteries, as it is that the role of the demoniac in his thought was important. But for him philosophy is an ascension towards a being which one attains by a hierarchic series of stages. The sacred of the social world can be symbolic, but he pursues another initiation, that which, by the progress of the intelligence, gives access to a world other than that of appearances, a world of forms truer than the images that reflect it. It is no longer a matter of powers hidden in things, but of a sort of profaned supernatural, even if one must recognize in the eternity and immutability

² Henry Duméry: *Philosophie de la religion*, Paris, 1957, v. II, p. 114.

of these forms some relation with the divine. The philosopher who has contemplated these summits must become a theologian, that is, must seek the best terms for speaking of God. In opposition to the popular and poetic mythology, he must recognize that Zeus has a royal soul, and therefore refer to the analogy of that which represents to mankind the noblest and greatest qualities: justice and organizing intelligence. This is certainly not the only way in which Plato evokes the supreme Being. His transcendence is indicated by the image of light, in the *Republic*, light which at the same time gives life and permits vision, irradiation which spreads and reflects into our deepest shadows. But transcendence is not the only note, since the soul of the world, made of the purest substance, presides over all nature, and introduces into the world something of the divine. Thus a theology is sketched, by image, which justifies the spiritual effort of man to order his life according to what he understands of divine order, according to intelligence and not according to the impulse of emotion, of sacred terror.

But Judaeo-Christian theology arrives at a much more radical thesis, since for it the nebulousness of the divine, the natural immanence, disappears before an absolute which is God. Scripture contains the story of a tribal God, confounded in the crowd of gods of nations and places, who reveals himself gradually as the unique God, personal and creative. In his uniqueness he is the God of all men, the all-powerful Lord of the entire world, whose wisdom ordained the world's form as it ordains the course of human history. In his role as the creator his radical difference from the creature is implied. If the world, well governed, carries the mark of God and, if the heavens sing his glory, we are nonetheless faced with a non-sacred world which contains nothing of the divine. The world obeys sovereign decrees, and thus can be known and used by us; but it is without initiative and without soul, and this negation is one of the most certain constants in Christian philosophy. And it is certainly a world, in the most positive sense of the word, which is the premise of the traditional cosmological proofs. Finally, the personal character of God means that the divine is not nebulous, that it is an *I* opposed to a *you*, that it is neither deaf nor dumb but that its Word is the means of communication with the intelligent creature. Thus an absolute transcendence distinguishes God from the sacred. He is

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neither localized nor immanent in things. He carries the ontological reality of the supernatural as of nature.

Two remarks are necessary here. The first is of a linguistic nature: French has two words of the same root, *sacré* and *saint*,³ which other languages confuse. The distinction is important, however, because if the sacred is essentially that which is set apart, the holy implies also the interiorization which gives it a personal and spiritual quality. If one says interchangeably of a place that it is sacred or that it is holy, its sacredness relates to its consecration; its holiness refers to its spiritual state, not to its function, to the power which it has to manipulate sacred objects. One could easily show a process of de-sacralization throughout the Old Testament, from the struggle against the mysteries of the trees, rivers and mountains of Palestine to the disappearance in successive historical episodes of all the material supports of the divine: the Tablets of the Law, the Ark of the Covenant and finally the Temple and its sacrifice themselves. "Judaism is a religion without images, and even without altars beyond that of the Temple; it desired to preserve monotheistic belief from all idolatry."⁴ To the extent indeed that the sacred retains the affective powers of man, man turns from his vocation and creates an idol. The true cult is in spirit and in truth.

Will it be objected that Christianity introduced a new sacralization in the theophany of the Incarnation? This is the thesis of Duméry: "The faith in the Incarnate Word concentrates in the sole person of Christ the source of sacralization.... It collects in a single main foyer all the sacrality which until then was sparse and diffused."⁵ If this formula is not deprived of all historical thought, one may ask if the meaning of the doctrine is really in this condensation and redistribution of the sacred, if the ambiguity of the Incarnation cannot just as well signify a profanation of the God who enters into human misery even unto

³ *Sanctus* comes from *sancire*, to prescribe by law, and *sacratus* from *sacrare*, to make sacred. Both verbs come from *sacer*, sacred.

⁴ Henry Duméry, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

death, as a sacralization of the world. The Gospel, which abolishes the last elements of that which was sacred to the Jews: sacrifices, purification, the sabbath; does it not play the role of a profaner? In any case, the accent is not on the diffusion of the sacred from a unique center, as an effusion of the divine in things or as a power, but on the sanctification of the human person, in his relations with the person of God, with revelation that can be heard as a word. Sanctification is the action of carrying grace into the heart of the profane, where a new life is developed by obedience.

It remains certain that Christianity has played an ambiguous role in Western history. It has not remained on a purely spiritual level, but has become the religion, in the traditional sense of the word, of a defined society. This means, in conformity with the schema of Duméry, that it has agreed to assume social sacredness; that, in the first part of its history, it has been a conscious attempt to gather together as much as possible of the world's sacredness. The Middle Ages organized a venerated calendar of sacred places and objects, introduced the sacred into domestic, professional and political institutions. It is this work which gave mediaeval society a structure we call Christian. But the rupture of this harmony has contributed to making Christianity a conservative power, which has sharpened certain conflicts, particularly those from which modern science stems. Thus the cosmic sacralization, translating the transcendence into images, made blasphemous the Galilean idea that the earth is already in the heavens, like any other body. One could make similar observations about the quarrel of evolution or of the development of historical techniques. The Age of Enlightenment drew the lesson that Christianity is the symbol of obscurity; and this break, which became more profound when the social plan and the powerful transformations of the industrial world brought with them the revision of a quantity of moral principals thought to be sacred, characterizes the modern world.

This being the case, one may ask whether Christianity has not been disloyal to its own essence, and whether it does not contain in embryo the idea that the world is profane since it is totally different from its creator. To which could be added the idea that the sovereignty of God over the totality of beings excludes the existence of two separate domains, subject to different orders.

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Everything is confided to the responsibility of man, at the risk that he may conflict with God; the meaning of sin and grace is of a totally different order than the dualism of the sacred and the profane. In this perspective, the Reformation would appear as an attempt at the de-sacralization of objects, of men and of institution—even ecclesiastical ones—as is clear in the interpretation of the "sacraments." Not, moreover, without the human need for the sacred having taken the offensive again in the course of history.

To resume, it seems to us that Christianity has been one of the important sources of Western profanation, as much in ridding man of naturalistic and sociological idolatries as in freeing the intelligence and the creative capabilities of man, who has the right to master nature according to his power. This cannot be said without posing certain questions. Is a man who no longer has to reckon with the sacred, and lives in a universe henceforth profane, still capable of conserving or rediscovering a hierarchy of values? Is he not tempted to conceive of his liberty as indifferent? In short, to consider himself as the god of this world? In the perspective of the death of God Nietzsche recognized the necessity for assuming the heritage and its risks. Our period of exaggeration and experiment cannot help but make us uneasy. The progressive idealism of the last century risks being checked by our incertitudes about right and morality, by the resurrection of political tyranny applied to a technocracy, by the contempt of physical man which is shown by so many of our enterprises, by the acceptance of cruelty, as soon as society becomes an absolute end and the individual becomes the means. New de-mystifications of the socially sacred become necessary when the meaning of existence is lost in reference to the transcendent, if we wish to conserve the respect of man, and even of things, and not revert to barbarism.

DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA

AN APPRECIATION ON THE OCCASION OF THE CENTENNIAL OF TOCQUEVILLE'S DEATH

Like a great work of literary art, which indeed it is, Alexis de Tocqueville's extraordinary analysis of American society grows more impressive with each exposure to it. Everything has changed and nothing has changed since *Democracy in America* was published in the 1830's. Its author grasped with remarkable perception both the mutable and the immutable qualities of man. There could be nothing more salutary for us today than to assimilate his fine sense of what was permanent in a world which, like ours, was undergoing deep convulsions. Committed to the classical economics of Adam Smith, Tocqueville did not share Smith's illusions about the eternal nature of the market. On the contrary, as Albert Salomon has emphasized, his point of view was Heraclitean, the specter of continual change and ceaseless transformation dominating his thought. Surely such a perspective, which antedates both Darwin and Marx, is more ap-

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propriate for sociologists in a revolutionary age than elegantly constructed theories of social equilibrium which treat change as a special problem or a *deus ex machina*.

This is perhaps the first and most important lesson to be learned from Tocqueville by a generation of social scientists who so often suffer from a kind of self-imposed cultural amnesia. To those who neglect the comparative and historical understanding of a social reality that is evolving before our eyes, it must surely be instructive to read a book about the United States which is also about ancient Rome and medieval Europe, as well as about France and England through the centuries. Not that Tocqueville makes use in any formal and self-conscious way of what is sometimes called the "comparative method" or the "historical approach." These were built into his outlook: he could not help seeing reality as changing or viewing the new society he wished to understand as a "figure" against the "ground" of the European and classical social orders he knew so well. As he said of his own book on America:

Though I seldom mentioned France, I did not write a page without thinking of her, and placing her as it were before me. And what I specifically tried to draw out, and to explain in the United States, was not the whole condition of that foreign society, but the points in which it differs from our own, or resembles us. It is always by noticing likenesses or contrasts that I succeeded in giving an interesting and accurate description of the New World . . . I believe that this perpetual silent reference to France was a principal cause of the book's success.

It is precisely the absence of "perpetual silent reference" to other times and places that makes so much of American sociology seem parochial. And too often, when this deficiency is noted, a comparative and historical view is recommended as a special methodological "approach" to be added to a repertory of competing and alternative approaches. Or else comparative study is regarded as a means of attaining abstract generalizations or social "laws" rather than as a way of understanding deeply a particular slice of reality by, in Tocqueville's words, "noticing likenesses or contrasts."

For the rest, what shall we say of a work whose chapter headings contain more pith and wisdom than any lengthy treatise since published on the same subject? Let us consider only a few

of the riches Tocqueville set before his reader over a hundred and twenty years ago in the second volume of *Democracy in America*:

1. A full-blown sociological approach, derived in part from his incomparable predecessor, Montesquieu, for whose geographical determinism he had no more use than for Gobineau's racism. Tocqueville's broad-ranging rejection of geographic and racial theories of cultural differences resembles that of Arnold Toynbee in the first volume of *The Study of History*. But unlike Toynbee, Tocqueville develops a conception of ethos or national character to account for the varieties of men and institutions he observed. So, for example, he noted how, in their habitual intercourse, Americans are much more sociable than the English. This discrepancy in somewhat puzzling because, "The Americans are connected with England by their origin, their religion, their language and partially by their customs"—which is why these two peoples are so much alike; if the dominant personality of one is outgoing and that of the other is imperturbable, it is because "they differ only in their social condition." To Tocqueville the normative and cultural determination of national character was taken for granted. Thus for him the reserve of Englishmen proceeds much more from the constitution of their country, and from the total social condition implied by that constitution, than from the innate qualities of its inhabitants. Their stock, as he explicitly put it, has no bearing on the matter.

2. A modern sociology of religion. Tocqueville anticipated the position later taken by Durkheim and others that religion in some form is a constitutive, and therefore indispensable, element of all social orders. Men cannot do without a body of dogmatic belief that most of them uncritically accept and on the basis of which they achieve cohesion and unity. Ritual observances are also necessary. These assumptions Tocqueville would share with contemporary sociologists of religion. Furthermore, he would share a large measure of their objectivity, a detached and disinterested state more remarkable in him as a self-conscious Christian than, let us say, in the "religiously a-musical" Max Weber. Yet he is Weberian in spirit when he observes that he has neither the right nor the

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intention "of examining the super-natural means that God employs to infuse religious belief," that he is "considering religions in a purely human point of view," and that "Christianity itself has felt, to some extent, the influence that social and political conditions exercise on religious opinions." And Tocqueville also reminds us of Weber in noting how the American taste for material well-being had been joined to religious institutions despite—or because of—their original and mistaken effort to eradicate that taste. Weber might have said what the Lynds documented and what any reader of *The Power of Positive Thinking* might conclude, that judging from the sermons of American clergymen, "It is often difficult to ascertain . . . whether the principal object of religion is to procure eternal felicity in the other world or prosperity in this."

3. A sensitive grasp of life in the pecuniary civilization he was studying. One need not wait for Veblen in the twentieth century to apprehend the ubiquitousness and omnivorousness of business. Two and a half decades before the Civil War foresaw the same qualities. Writing in the early decades of the Industrial Revolution, he already beheld a country in which there were not just the usual manufacturing and commercial classes but a free-for-all where everybody was simultaneously engaged in industry and commerce. In an overwhelmingly agricultural economy husbandmen had begun to forsake traditional subsistence farming for specialized cash crops. Much later Veblen was to say of them that they cultivated "the main chance" as much as the soil. Tocqueville knew when it could not have been so obvious to the world at large that "The Americans carry their business-like qualities into agriculture, and their trading passions are displayed in that as in their other pursuits." Art and science were among "the other pursuits" he had in mind.

If a taste for letters has been aroused in new classes, they in turn have introduced the trading spirit into literature. Tocqueville regarded it as a calamity that the same mercantile spirit should have been injected into scientific inquiry. He warned against confounding the dominant desire of a business minded community to utilize scientific knowledge with the pure desire, the "disinterested passion" to acquire such knowledge. Nor was it from hostility to

pragmatism, the indigenous American philosophy he so clearly anticipated and even espoused without giving it the name. Pierce and James were later to supply, that Tocqueville came to hold this view. William James began his essay on religion, "The Will to Believe," with a famous passage from Pascal's Wager. Neither James nor Tocqueville could abide the commercialization and banalization of spiritual life. On the ethical side, Tocqueville stood for a kind of purified pragmatism. He saw his contemporaries teaching what seemed to him a perverse gospel: that what is useful is never wrong. It led him to exclaim, "Will nobody undertake to make them understand how what is right may be useful?"

As for science, he understood it to be an enterprise divided into three parts: the first consisting of theoretical principles and abstract notions with no obvious applicability; the second composed of general truths still belonging to pure theory but leading "by a straight and short road to practical results;" the third made up of methods of application and execution. While he conceded that each could be cultivated separately, Tocqueville believed that no one of them would prosper for long without the other two. All this is truistic by now; it is the standard view of philosophers of science. Yet, how empty and abstract are the formalism with which so many of us still work, how excessive the technological and methodological preoccupations of an American science—natural and social—still so largely given over to engineering and profitability. Not out of opposition to pragmatism, but from devotion to it, did Tocqueville inveigh against sterile theorizing and the contrasting but related addiction of American science to premature practicality.

4. Open-mindedness and clearheadedness in the perception of all things. Although Tocqueville was profoundly engagé, he was able to view human institutions—those he feared and those he admired—in their final ambiguity and their infinite complexity. A democrat who felt that the credo of equality might lead to new forms of submission in man, he was also a defender of *laissez faire* capitalism who recoiled from the cruelties of that system and skillfully anatomized its imperfection. Adam Smith was a professional moralist in *The Wealth of Nations* no less than

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in everything else he wrote. The manufacture of pins is Smith's most memorable illustration of the division of labor and of industrial efficiency. Yet it was Tocqueville who raised the question, "What can be expected of a man who has spent twenty years of his life in making heads for pins?" But his answer is much closer to that of Karl Marx than to that of Adam Smith. An industrial worker has his thoughts forever set upon the object of his daily toil; he is hopelessly constricted; even his body has contracted certain fixed habits which it can never shake off; "In a world," Tocqueville wrote, "he no longer belongs to himself." Or, as Marxists would put it, the factory worker is a victim of alienation.

We too often tend to remember only that Tocqueville explored the consequences of equality, as if he had not explored the subtleties of stratification in modern society. Equality meant many things—above all homogeneity—to him; it did not mean the abolition of economic classes. In point of fact, a typically compressed and immensely suggestive chapter of *Democracy in America* is entitled "How an Aristocracy May be Created by Manufactures." And Tocqueville believed that the rise of a moneyed aristocracy or plutocracy proceeds in proportion as the workman becomes weaker, more narrow-minded and more dependent. "The art advances, the artisan recedes." And again, "At the very time at which the science of manufactures lowers the class of workmen, it raises the class of masters." One paragraph in this vein resembles a nightmare out of H. G. Wells, for it conjures up nothing so much as the counter-Utopian world envisaged in *The Time Machine*. Soon, Tocqueville predicted, the workman "will require nothing but physical strength, without intelligence," whereas the master already "stands in need of science, and almost of genius, to ensure success. This man resembles more and more the administrator of a vast empire; that man, a brute." It was his holistic and organic conception of society which enabled Tocqueville to apprehend not only the defects of a civilization's virtues and the virtues of its defects, but also how such a thing as equality could flourish alongside growing inequality.

David Riesman recently remarked that much of *Democracy in America* is truer today than when it was written. This is so of Tocqueville from first to last, and nowhere more so than in his

reflections on the American economy. This young Frenchman, only in his twenties, surveying a domestic scene still crowded with plows and spinning wheels, could clearly discern the business cycle, the principle of mass production, the triumph of salesmanship, of creative destruction and of planned or "built in" obsolescence. He called commercial panics the endemic disease of a people so completely devoted to productive industry that they would always be exposed to formidable and unexpected economic embarrassments. In contrasting earlier ages with his own, he not only foresaw Henry Ford's achievement but actually described it in advance. Formerly an artisan sought to sell his workmanship at a high price to the few, whereas "he now conceives that the more expeditious way of getting rich is to sell them at a low price to all." Why, Tocqueville inquired of an American sailor, are the ships of this country not built to last for a long time? Because, came the reply, such rapid progress is taking place in navigation that the finest vessel would be useless if it lasted beyond a few years. With these words that fell "on a particular subject, from an uninstructed man," Tocqueville "recognized the general and systematic idea upon which a great people direct all their concerns," much as Max Weber crystalized his thinking on the social significance of religion in America after an apparently casual club-car conversation.

Tocqueville understood that we mass produce goods to be sold in large volume at a low price, that such goods cannot be durable, and that they are regularly misrepresented to their purchasers. The boon is therefore a mixed one; "when none but the wealthy had watches, they were almost all very good ones; few are now made that are worth much, but everyone has one in his pocket." The worker has been constrained to produce many imperfect commodities at a rapid pace, claiming for them qualities they do not really have—and the consumer has had to content himself with them. There is very little in our affluent society or its consumer economy that Tocqueville failed to find in early nineteenth century America.

5. A prevision of mass society and mass culture. What struck Tocqueville most forcibly wherever he went was that men had grown more like one another. Americans lived homogeneous,

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excited and monotonous lives, and in this they were merely a step ahead of other peoples. For, cried Tocqueville, as if he had just circumnavigated the globe in a jet airliner, "Variety is disappearing from the human race; the same ways of acting, thinking, and feeling are to be met with all over the world." And the sameness they have created has not made them happy. Tocqueville, who captured the pathos of American culture as thoroughly as he did its political promise, sensed a brooding presence, a cloud hung habitually over the brow, a certain seriousness amounting almost to sadness in the pleasures of Americans who clutch at everything, hold nothing fast and soon loosen their grasp to pursue fresh gratifications. Why was this the condition of *Homo Americanus* and why would it presently be the condition of mankind at large? Here is a large part of Tocqueville's explanation:

When all the privileges of birth and fortune are abolished, when all professions are accessible to all, and a man's own energies may place him at the top of any one of them, an easy and unbounded career seems open to his ambition and he will readily persuade himself that he is born to no common destiny. But this is an erroneous notion, which is corrected by daily experience. The same equality that allows every citizen to conceive these lofty hopes renders all the citizens less able to realize them; it circumscribes their powers on every side, while it gives freer scope to their desires. Not only are they themselves powerless, but they are met at every step by immense obstacles which they did not at first perceive. They have swept away the privileges of some of their fellow creatures which stood in their way, but they have opened the door to universal competition; the barrier has changed its shape rather than its position. When men are nearly alike and all follow the same track, it is very difficult for any one individual to walk quickly and cleave a way through the dense throng that surrounds and presses on him. This constant strife between the inclination springing from the equality of condition and the means it supplies to satisfy them harasses and wearies the mind.

This "constant strife" produces the subterranean despair and perpetual dissatisfaction of Americans. It helps to account for the high crime rate in this country—as Edwin H. Sutherland and Robert K. Merton have argued. And it is also directly responsible for something else that Tocqueville noticed: the inordinately high rate of insanity among a people whose hopes and desires were often blasted, whose souls were more stricken and perturbed, and whose reason more frequently gave way just as its pleasures were more intense than those of earlier peoples.

We do more than read our own anxiety into Tocqueville if we find him, as a lover of freedom, most fearful that modern human beings will become passive and indifferentiated members of a mass, willing to submit without complaint to remote authorities as long as they are permitted "to procure the petty and paltry pleasures with which they glut their lives." He thought that democratic man had developed a greater readiness to listen submissively to the voice of the herd, that public opinion was more than ever mistress of the world, that in the United States, to use his own absolutely up-to-date terminology, "the majority undertakes to supply a multitude of ready-made opinions for the use of individuals, who are thus relieved from the necessity of forming opinions of their own."

Such strictures on the "tyranny of the majority" and their author's conviction that "a democratic society . . . might offer singular facilities for the establishment of despotism" are often praised, particularly by conservative thinkers, as a prevision of the cruelties of modern totalitarian regimes, which unfailingly claim to act in the name of the nation or the masses. But Tocqueville's conception of a democratic despotism, like that of Mill who, influenced by him, expressed similar views, bears little resemblance to the terroristic dictatorships of Hitler and Stalin. Witness the following observation:

This same principle of equality which facilitates despotism tempers its rigor. We have seen how the customs of society become more humane and gentle in proportion as men become more equal and alike. When no member of the community has much power or much wealth, tyranny is, as it were, without opportunities and a field of action. As all fortunes are scanty, the passions of men are naturally circumscribed, their imagination limited, their pleasures simple. This universal moderation moderates the sovereign himself and checks within certain limits the inordinate stretch of his desires.

This hardly describes a world of purges, mass deportations, concentration camps, ideological fanaticism, and ambitions to world conquest! It suggests a Huxleyan world of souls enervated by constant satiation of material and bodily desires rather than an Orwellian world of brutality and deprivation creating a reservoir of hatred to be exploited and manipulated by the rulers. But Tocqueville's vision of democratic despotism brings to mind most

forcefully the drift and tendency of American life in the past two decades, and nowhere more so than where he remarks "I have always thought that servitude of the regular, quiet, and gentle kind which I have just described might be combined more easily than is commonly believed with some of the outward forms of freedom, and that it might even establish itself under the wing of the sovereignty of the people."

Any further selection of brilliant flashes, sustained *aperçus*, prescient insights, and what are pretentiously known as "researchable hypotheses" must be arbitrary. Every page of *Democracy in America* has its own harvest. In this one book Alexis de Tocqueville made direct contributions to: the philosophy of history (he rejected the Great Man theory as firmly as Marx did without losing sight of the contingent in human affairs); the sociology of language (he touched upon a separate language of the poor, a language of the rich, a language of the commoner, and a language of the nobility; a learned language and a colloquial one; what happens to the idiom when social classes are recruited from and mixed with each other, how dialects decline and patois disappears in the New World where Tocqueville recognized that an American language—still not generally acknowledged in H. L. Mencken's day—had come into being); the sociology of literature in which, as usual, he struck just the right note: "I should say more than I mean if I were to assert that the literature of a nation is always sub-ordinate to its social state and its political constitution. I am aware that independently of these causes, there are several others which confer certain characteristics on literary productions; but these appear to me to be the chief. The relations that exist between the social and political condition of a people and the genius of its authors are always numerous; whoever knows the one is never completely ignorant of the other"; the sociology of education, on which Tocqueville's comments are as topical as this morning's headlines, for they concern our grammar schools where so often "superfluous matters, badly learned," stand in the way of sound instruction; where the national vice of "in-attention" is cultivated, and where the American child's curiosity reveals itself to be "at once insatiable and cheaply satisfied," for the reason that as a youth and in adulthood that child "cares more to know a great deal quickly than to know

anything well;" the whole problem of radical discrimination which he understood to be the virulent and disruptive force it was and is, and whose essence he conveyed in a single sentence: "To debauch a woman of color scarcely injures the reputation of an American; to marry her dishonors him." There is nothing in American sociology or American literature to compare in compactness with this quotation except the one word Herman Melville put in Don Benito Cereno's mouth when he had his naive American, Captain Delano, ask: "What has cast such a shadow upon you?" That one word was "The Negro."

With some effort, we stop here, ignoring what Tocqueville had to say about the family, the army, the voluntary association and the lonely crowd. These are all fairly familiar. There are more pressing ethical issues of which we constantly need to remind ourselves. In an age of just such merciless pressure for conformity as Tocqueville predicted, it is well to remember his moving credo: "For myself, when I feel the hand of power lie heavy on my brow, I care but little to know who oppresses me; and I am not the more disposed to pass beneath the yoke because it is held out to me by the arms of a million men."

Our interest in Tocqueville should not be treated as an anti-Quarian exercise. To establish that all of sociology is a footnote to Tocqueville would resemble too much that scholarly gamesmanship with which we are already surfeited. It is enough to say that we can learn a great deal from our superb precursor, a thinker who was not afraid to speak in plain specific terms, a man who wanted us to realize that civilization may not only be torn from our grasp, but that we might trample it underfoot ourselves, that we could ultimately be enervated by a kind of "virtuous materialism," and that we might noiselessly forsake our freedom. All of this is of the utmost relevance to us as citizens, as intellectuals and as social scientists. But there is one final admonition in Tocqueville that is even more to the point. When so many of us have become employees of corporate institutions of learning, of business, of the military and of government, we should be more mindful than ever of Tocqueville's passionate belief that it is our task to help prevent the prostration of man, not to complete it. Social science can find no better guide to professional ethics than the magnificent young Frenchman we are commemorating this year.

Notes on the Contributors

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Internationale du Travail", March 1953); studies on Saint-Just, Saint-Simon, Marx etc. in "Le Contrat Social" (1957-60); the preface to *Le syndicalisme aux Etats-Unis* (Editions Génin 1960).

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The English-language edition of *Diogenes* is sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. J. de Mênil, Houston, Texas.

